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The holy week



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Devotional Commentary on the Gospel Narrative

VOLUME VI

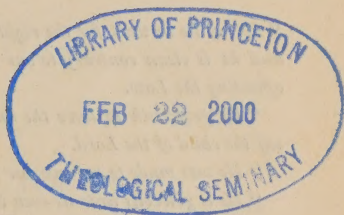
THE HOLY WEEK

RIVINGTONS

London	<i>Waterloo Place</i>
Oxford	<i>High Street</i>
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Devotional Commentary on the Gospel Narrative

THE HOLY WEEK



BY THE

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LATE FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, OXFORD

NEW EDITION

RIVINGTONS

London, Oxford, and Cambridge

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“ Let us lie in wait for the righteous ; because he is not for our turn, and he is clean contrary to our doings : he upbraideth us with our offending the Law.

“ He professeth to have the knowledge of God : and he calleth himself the child of the Lord.

“ He was made to reprove our thoughts.

“ He is grievous unto us even to behold : for his life is not like other men’s ; his ways are of another fashion.

“ We are esteemed of him as counterfeits : he abstaineth from our ways, as from filthiness : he pronounceth the end of the just to be blessed, and maketh his boast that God is his Father.

“ Let us see if his words be true : and let us prove what shall happen in the end of him.

“ For if the just man be the son of God, He will help him ; and deliver him from the hand of his enemies.

“ Let us examine him with despitefulness and torture, that we may know his meekness, and prove his patience.

“ Let us condemn him with a shameful death : for by his own saying he shall be respected.

“ Such things did they imagine, and were deceived : for their own wickedness hath blinded them.

“ As for the mysteries of God, they knew them not.”

THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON.

BISLEY,

Feast of the Annunciation, 1843.

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PART I

The Approach to Jerusalem

“The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in. Behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.
“But who may abide the day of His coming?”

SECTION I

STATE OF FEELING IN THE CITY

NOW that our Lord had left the house of Zaccheus, and was approaching the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, we are naturally desirous to know what was the state of feeling in that city. Though His manner of life and external appearance had been so mean and humble, yet by this time there had arisen a great sensation respecting Him; which had been much increased by the account of His having raised Lazarus from the grave, at a time when they thought He had disappeared from among them. So much so, as to have occasioned the meeting before mentioned of the Chief Priests, and the declaration of Caiaphas that it was expedient He should be put to death. This sensation was now naturally more intense

and prevailing as the Feast approached. It was the case at Jerusalem, that the city became more and more the resort of strangers from the country, before the actual commencement of the Feast. They would, many of them, bring accounts from the country, and would also themselves hear what had occurred at Jerusalem. With much, doubtless, of good will towards Him, among those who had derived some benefit to themselves or their friends, or had in their own hearts any sense of holiness; yet, in the generality, there would exist a secret hatred and fear¹ (and fear is cruel), and what the Scriptures sometimes call envy, as far as they were given to any habits of self-indulgence or pride. Yet this natural dislike of goodness would be such as to cloak itself (for it usually does so) even from themselves under various specious pretences. At this time this bad feeling was mostly found under the profession of external religion; for such had now become a great badge of distinction, so as only to minister to national and individual pride, instead of purifying the heart. To such a degree was this now the case, that they who went up to purify themselves in order to keep the Feast, were desirous to imbrue their hands in innocent blood. It was, therefore, to this that the Holy Spirit had particularly called their attention throughout the Prophets, pointing out this "spot in their feasts," by the finger of reproof, and also of prophetic warning. It was to this circumstance too, that our Lord had always directed His teaching of these Pharisees, as knowing what was in the heart of man, and foreseeing this consummation of hypocrisy to which they were tending. Even now, had they been at all desirous to purify themselves in reality, by that cleansing of the

¹ δεινὸς ἂν θεοὺς σέβει.—Æsch. Sept. cont. Theb. 593.

heart through repentance, which the Law signified, as well as by the external rites, which it ordained, they would have been preserved from that great wickedness,—they would have believed and received the Christ,—they would have set aside the leaven of the Pharisees, and kept the Feast in “sincerity and truth.” So much in all things is “Wisdom justified of her” own “children;” for they, indeed, can well see that wisdom of God which required this purification from sin before they approached the Feast where Christ was to be found. This purification required by the Law, was like that call to repentance which preceded the coming in of the Kingdom; for without repentance the eyes of flesh could not “see the salvation of God.” It is like the Lent which precedes Easter, in order to give us eyes to discern Christ Crucified. Nay, it is so with the Gospel itself, for we must purify ourselves, lest we should not behold Christ therein, even though He sitteth in His own Temple. “*Now the Passover of the Jews,*” says St. John, “*was nigh; and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover, that they might purify themselves. They were seeking, therefore, for Jesus, and saying with one another, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that He will not come unto the Feast?*” In so light and easy a manner were they conversing, with such expressions, as in a matter partly of curiosity, and partly of successful power. For they thought that the time had surely arrived for the success of their malice, and that they would take Him as in a net, by the necessity of His presence at the Feast; unless, indeed, as they seemed to apprehend, our Lord should not venture there from fear. For the Evangelist adds, “*Now both the Chief Priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that if any one*

knew where He was, he should declare it, that they might take Him."

Well, therefore, did our Lord say unto them by His own Evangelical Prophet, when He began more distinctly to prefigure to them the coming in of this dispensation: "Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hateth: they are a trouble unto Me, I am weary to bear them wash you, make you clean²."

More, indeed, than they meant did they speak of in the Temple, when they spoke of His coming to the Feast, and apprehended that they should not find Him there. It was needful above all things that our Blessed Lord should be present at that Feast, and at every feast of His Church; but, from that day to this, the Jews will not believe that He is there to be found. "We," says St. Austin, "may show the Jews where He is, I wish they would be willing to hear and to apprehend Him³." He must needs be present at every feast, but He will not manifest Himself therein to those who dishonour Him. All feasts that were ordained of old in figure, were but in order to celebrate His coming, Who is Himself the Feast and the Sacrifice. He must come as a victim to that Feast, for it is but the shadow of a feast without Him. Woe to us if we do not find Him at our feasts! We are the false Jews who live in the letter and not in the Spirit, if we do not behold Him present at our festivals. And these, our own Passovers and Eucharistic tables, Sacramental and substantial as they are, yet they do but shadow forth and prepare us for that His Coming in Glory, which the Jews then carnally and vainly expected;—when they that are found worthy shall sit down with Him, and "eat and drink" at His table in the Kingdom of God.

² Isa. i. 14. 16.

³ In Joan. Tr. lib. iv

In the meanwhile it was reported,—yet, perhaps, privately, and among those better inclined towards Him,—that He had arrived at Bethany; and this, connected with the account of Lazarus, arrested attention, and led many to go there.

SECTION II

THE SUPPER AT BETHANY

IT was now probably on the evening of the Jewish Sabbath, or Saturday, that our Lord came from the house of Zaccheus, where He had stayed during the Sabbath-day, to the village of Bethany; and there we may well imagine, after what had taken place at what appears to have been His last visit, He would be received with something more than welcome. "*Jesus, therefore,*" says St. John, "*six days before the Passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom He raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper.*" It was a supper recorded by the three Evangelists, on account of the close connexion it had with the events that ensued, in suggesting the design to the traitor, and of itself very full of incidents for Divine contemplation. It is merely in speaking of that treacherous design that the other two Evangelists record it, and therefore out of the order of the narrative;—a practice not unusual with St. Matthew, while St. Mark often adopts from him the same order without comment. "*When Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper*" (Matt., Mark), "*as He reclined at meat, there came*" (Mark), and "*approached Him*"

(Matt.) "*a woman having an alabaster box*" (Matt., Mark), "*of very precious ointment*" (Matt.); it was "*ointment of spikenard, very costly*" (Mark); "*a pound of ointment of spikenard of much value*" (John). It seems in this its exceeding preciousness and exquisite fragranciness, to have differed from that similar offering of "the sinner," in St. Luke¹, of which nothing of this kind is mentioned. Our Lord in providing that this good deed should be published to all the world, has also given us to know who the woman was; it was Mary who had "chosen the good part," who long before this time had sat at His feet, while her sister Martha was serving. Now also again Martha is serving, but not reproving her sister. That part has now fallen to another, and if this Mary should, as St. Augustin and some others suppose, be the same person as "the sinner," recorded as anointing our Lord in St. Luke, during the earlier part of His ministry in Galilee, then this would be the third time our Lord defended her against reproof. This Simon, according to Theophylact, was reported to have been the father of Martha, which would account for her "serving" as natural in her father's house, and for Lazarus "sitting at meat." But this is uncertain and unimportant; and still more so the vague surmise of some, that this Simon was the father of Judas Iscariot. If not so near a relative as Theophylact suggests, yet he was evidently a friend of that afflicted family, and probably was healed himself by our Lord. For he was one that had deeply known affliction, and his name was still an opprobrious one, "the leper," like an unsightly scar, that denoted his past wounds. Thus as our Lord was last night at the house of one of hated name, a publican, so was He now at that of the

¹ Ch. vii. See Ministry, 2nd Year, pp. 129—138.

leper. Their affliction and evil name with the world seem to have entitled them to His especial favour and countenance; and perhaps had been the causes which had rendered them worthy of His regard. "*And Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those that reclined at the table with Him. Mary, therefore*" (John), she who had chosen that which should be never taken from her, "*having taken the pound of ointment of spikenard*" (John); "*and having broken the box of alabaster*" (Mark), so that nothing should be spared, and that none should remain therein for any other purpose, "*she poured it on His head*" (Matt., Mark), "*as He reclined at meat*" (Matt.); and then "*anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair*" (John). Or, it may be, first of all anointed His feet, as St. Augustin suggests, and then proceeded to arise in humble confidence with her good deed, and ventured to anoint His head also². She was not attending on all the guests generally, observes St. Chrysostom, but on our Lord alone she bestows this honour, and approaches Him not as man, but as One greater than man³, which is shown by the very lowly action of wiping His feet with her hair. "*And the house was filled,*" adds St. John, "*with the odour of the ointment.*" That poor habitation was filled throughout with the delightful fragrancy, like a palace in which a king is received; and may well represent the Church, which has been ever fragrant with that act of piety, the embalming of our Lord's body for His death.

Theophylact observes, that this supper was in itself more than an ordinary one, that it was a festival which was customary among the Jews on the day previous to their taking up and setting apart the Paschal Lamb,

² See Passion, p. 411.

³ Hom. lxiv. In Joan.

which took place always four days before it was sacrificed, that is, on the tenth day of that month⁴. St. Cyril of Alexandria also⁵ intimates, that such was probably the custom, and states as the reason, that after the taking up of the lamb, they gave themselves up until the Festival to fasting, abstinence, and purification. Such circumstances, which have a reference to the typical lamb, suggest that there may be some Divine significance and purpose in all these matters, and in the embalming of our Lord's body, as preparatory to the great Sacrifice. Indeed Quesnel well observes that "every thing is mysterious in this time of mysteries." As Jacob of old "poured oil upon the top of the stone⁶," thereby dedicating it as an holy altar to God, so now in this woman doth the true and spiritual Israel anoint Him who is "the elect corner-stone," chosen of God and precious. As by the Law all things were hallowed by the sacred oil, so by a mysterious providence was the Great Victim now anointed as the only offering well-pleasing to God. Thus as, at this time, and on the following day, all things marked Him out as the King, this pointed out also and designated the Anointed of God ;—Him of whom it is said, "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity ; wherefore God, even thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows⁷," and "Because of the savour of Thy good ointments, Thy name is as ointment poured forth⁸."

Full indeed is that house still with the fragrance of the ointment : "by that house of Bethany," the signification of which word is the "house of obedience," "no one

⁴ Exod. xii. 3.

⁶ Gen. xxviii. 18.

⁵ In Joan. Ev. lib. ix.

⁷ Ps. xlv. 8.

⁸ Cant. i. 3.

doubts," says Origen, "we must understand the Church⁹;" and another writer, carrying on the same inspiring thought, says of this house that it is "Heaven and earth." Both have been ever since fragrant with the memory of that piety; and well may devout Fathers dwell on the holy deed till they see all that may be spiritually represented by this acceptable offering in "the house of obedience," and endeavour to learn by what duties they themselves may set forth the same. Thus they suppose, that by chastity and fasting and prayers they may express the ointment on our Lord's Head; by walking in His steps, the anointing of His feet; by alms-deeds, by which our steps are cleansed, and all things are made clean unto us¹, the wiping His feet with the hairs of our head.

Let us dwell on the same holy lesson. Her head, the member most honourable, she applies to His feet, and such are our best actions, when our head and all our pride is laid at Christ's feet. The parts again are different, and different the action, but all parts are alike fragrant with the ointment; and what is all this taken together but Divine charity, comprehending all? For what was the ointment that came on the head of Aaron of old, but charity? it was that oil to which love is likened; it went down to the skirts of His clothing; and all over, it was throughout the fragrance of charity. And if we are to divide the good deed, for over many things is charity diffused, yet all is charity. On the Head of our Blessed Lord it may be chastity and fasting and prayers, yet all is charity. The anointing of our Lord's feet, those feet that ever went about doing good, may be to walk in His steps in lowly deeds and humility; yet this too is charity. And let the wiping His feet with her hair be

⁹ Com. in Matt. 77.

¹ Luke xi. 41.

to us no other than alms-deeds, which cleanse the soul, and turn superfluities to their proper use; wiping His feet with flowing locks, a holy use far better than ornament; yet this also is but charity. For this was but the outward demonstration of that charity that burned within her; and some visible expression corresponding to this will the like Divine charity set forth in us. Therefore all in all is charity, the sacrifice well-pleasing to God, and the incense fragrant in Heaven.

The action was indeed of itself a very costly one, and such as our Lord, in the meekness of the Son of Man, appears to have permitted with some reference to His death, for His death was "with the rich²," and therefore admitting of an expenditure which His life did not³. In allusion to its costliness St. Austin observes, that the character of such things depends on the disposition of him that receives them. "Whosoever," he says, "uses such things, and exceeds the limits of the custom of good men among whom he dwells, either affords a sign, or is criminal. Therefore, that which is generally criminal in other persons, in a Divine or prophetic person is a great sign of some matter⁴. "The sweet fragrance," he says in the same place, "is a good name, which, when any one hath for good works, while he is following Christ's steps, he is as it were embalming His feet with most precious ointment⁵." St. Chrysostom⁶ speaks of it in a manner still more worthy and divine, as an act of gracious condescension in our Lord, which he likens to that of Almighty God, in accepting the odour and smoke, and, we may add,

² Isa. liii.

⁴ And see *Æsch.* *Agam.* l. 881—923.

⁵ *De Doc. Ch. lib. iii. ch. 12.*

³ See *Passion*, p. 387.

⁶ *Hom. lxxxii.*

in approving also of the costliness of the victim in legal sacrifices.

Here then was Christ sitting, as the Anointed of God, whose fragrance filled the house with the sweet odour of this sacrifice, sitting in Bethany, "the house of obedience," sitting with the leper who was cleansed, and with the dead man whom He had raised to life, who sat up, and talked, and ate; and what is all this but a lively figure of His Church, where he who is cleansed from sin, and saved from its legal penalties, and he who hath been buried with Christ in Baptism, is restored to new life, sits with Christ in "the house of obedience," eating and drinking in His kingdom, which is filled with the odour of His death?

SECTION III

THE REMARK OF JUDAS

BUT the Body of the Lord embalmed for death, and the fragrance arising therefrom, is to some "a savour of life," and to others "a savour unto death." "*There were some who were angry among themselves*" (Mark); nay, St. Matthew takes the charge even on his own company of the Apostles, they were "*His own disciples, who, when they saw it, were angry*" (Matt.), "*and said, Why was this waste*" (Matt., Mark) "*of the ointment made?*" (Mark.) "*For this ointment might have been sold for much*" (Matt.): yea, even, St. Mark tells us, "*for more than three hundred pence*" (Mark), "*and been given to the poor*" (Matt., Mark). Such a sum certainly would have been much; for as a penny a day is, in the parable, the hire of a

labourer, it would have been a labouring man's wages for nearly a year. "*And they murmured against her*" (Mark).

Such might have been the feeling of the disciples, participating in the suggestion which Judas had made to them; for they might have thought perhaps of our Lord's words, that He would "have mercy and not sacrifice," and of His many injunctions on giving to the poor. Or it may be, as in other cases, that the general term is used in preference to mentioning the individual remark; for as, we know, St. Matthew often does this, so St. Mark often follows him in the same, but with a slight change, such as St. Mark here introduces, by saying "some," or certain persons, a term which serves to indicate a particular person not mentioned, rather than St. Matthew's general expression of "the disciples." It is indeed remarkable that St. Matthew and St. Mark, although they introduce it merely in connexion with the betrayal of Judas¹, yet neither of them mention expressly that connexion, nor even the name of Judas on this occasion; but when they come to speak of the betrayal on the following Wednesday, they then mention what had occurred at a feast at Bethany, neither expressly stating when that feast was, nor what immediate connexion it had with that betrayal; but it is St. John who fully explains to us that connexion, which was in the mind of the former writers, though not expressed, and clears up the whole narrative by mentioning the person of Judas in that transaction, as well as Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. Thus, whether the

¹ St. Matthew says that this supper occurred "when He was" (γενόμενου) at Bethany. Afterwards he goes on to say, "then (τότε) went Judas," but this does not always indicate order of time, for it is a mode of speech familiar with this Hebrew writer in the course of his narrative. See *Passion*, p. 168. *Ministry*, 2nd Year, p. 142.

other disciples took part in it or not, we know whose the remark was ; it was "*one of His disciples, Judas, the son of Simon, Iscariot, who was about to betray Him,*" who "*says, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?*" (John.) St. Austin says, that "the other disciples might have felt or expressed this, or that Judas might have persuaded them to it ; and that St. Matthew and St. Mark intimate the feelings of them all, but that Judas spake because he was a thief, they from care of the poor²." But at all events, whether he instigated the others or not, it was his act ; and surely, one would suppose that none but Judas could have been insensible of this honour done unto their Lord, the friend of the poor : for was not his Divine Master as sensible of their wants as himself ? it was but yesterday that He was at the house of one who, in order to receive Him worthily, gave half of his goods to feed the poor, as the most welcome entertainment he could afford Him. But love will ever catch at some mode of giving vent to itself, and in so doing will perform acceptable faithfulness, and actuated, as it were, by a sort of Divine instinct, will bring about far more than itself is conscious of ; whereas covetousness completely shuts up the eyes, and has no sense of holiness but so far as its value may be computed by money. And who but a Judas could have so nicely calculated the expense ? Nor is it any wonder, indeed, that he should begrudge the loss of three hundred pence, while he could sell his Lord Himself for thirty pieces of silver. "*This he said, not that he cared for the poor ; but because he was a thief and had the bag, and carried what was cast therein*" (John). This fact explains what would otherwise have been an unaccountable mystery, that one who

² De Cons. Ev. lib. ii. 79.

had witnessed for so long such wonderful indications of holiness, of power, and of wisdom, who had been constantly, as it were, in the midst of visible manifestations of Godhead, should have been so hardened in unbelief. It was this one sin in his heart, "the deceivableness" of which is so much spoken of, and these practices, that closed up his eyes so that he could not perceive our Lord's miracles, and stopped his ears that he could not hear His words, and rendered his heart incapable of understanding. And as "he who knoweth and doeth not, to him it is sin," so the unequalled privileges and advantages he enjoyed only increased his sinfulness, and therefore hardened him the more and added to his condemnation, so that he is known as one of the most favoured and the worst of men; as being in the Psalms and in Prophecy the very type of the wicked, and one whose fate was an emblem of theirs. It seems, indeed, to have been with reference to him, and in speaking of covetousness, our Lord had said, there are "some first who shall be last." We have also in this circumstance a pattern and evidence of that long-suffering and forbearance which surpasses the thought of man;—of Him who "maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust³." For on Judas, as on the other twelve, shone the light of His Heavenly instruction, and the rain came down of His gentle but continued warnings and reproofs.

"*But Jesus (on perceiving it,*" Matt.) "*said*" (Matt., Mark, John) "*unto them*" (Matt.), directing His answer to them generally, as if they had made the observation, or wishing thereby not to expose and exasperate the traitor, "*Let ye her alone*" (Mark). "*Why do ye trouble*" (Matt., Mark) "*her*" (Mark), "*the woman?*" (Matt.) "*for she hath*

³ Matt. v. 45. See Passion, p. 44.

wrought a good work on Me" (Matt., Mark). Or, as St. John says, addressing Judas only, "*Let her alone, for the day of My burying hath she kept this*" (John). "*For the poor,*" said He unto them all, "*have ye always with you*" (Matt., Mark, John); "*and whensoever ye will ye can do good unto them*" (Mark), "*but Me ye have not always*" (Matt., Mark, John). "*She hath done what she could*" (Mark). She felt, doubtless, that what she was now doing was but little indeed, in return for the inestimable riches that she had received, but it was the free will of a grateful mind, which deeply felt that it was nothing for Him to receive or for her to give; and in that largeness of heart which ariseth from overflowing love, she might have thought, what are the poor when compared with the Lord of the poor Himself, Who was there in poverty? Her brother had been lately restored to them by Him from the very corruption, the coldness and darkness, of the grave, and she herself felt assured within her of a miracle far greater and more wonderful even than that. His powerful Voice had called her own soul from the corruption, the darkness and cold desolation of a worse grave; had loosed the grave-clothes, the death-bands of sin, which had bound her, and had bid her go free in the light of a better day; and had received her to sit with Himself at Heavenly tables and to listen to His word.

To this encouragement our Lord adds the great and solemn occasion, which rendered this action even beyond the thought of her that did it, an act so suitable and an offering so acceptable to God. "*For in pouring this ointment upon My Body, she hath done it for the burying of Me*" (Matt.). "*She hath anticipated the anointing of My Body for the burial*" (Mark). She had done it for His burial, unconsciously, perhaps, and beyond her own thought,

but rendered so by the event ; or, it may be, that she had done so, even with some latent apprehension of the issue that approached. His frequent expressions of late respecting His own sufferings and death, though understood not by others, yet may, perhaps, have awakened in her some secret foreboding of impending ill ; the sense of which, in addition to all the benefits she had received, had filled her soul with that deep and devout tenderness, which is ever wont to break forth in some outward expression of bounty. She had done it for His burial, which was at hand. Thus were our Blessed Lord's words still recurring to this subject of His death. At the thought of this, envy may be appeased, and covetousness itself, for this one occasion, may relax its iron grasp, the poor themselves will not grudge their Lord this one and last boon. At the burial of a friend all mankind are wont to be liberal and even lavish, to give vent to their natural feelings, and that too beyond what necessity requires, or any apparent expediency ; even the poorest will suffer want, to lay up for the decency of their own funeral, or that of their friends. And, perhaps, in this observation respecting His burial, was contained a gentle remark to the traitor also, a prophetic allusion to His death, which would have moved even Judas, had not money reigned in his heart. "It is," says St. Chrysostom, as if He had said to him, "I am painful and burdensome to thee, wait but a little and I shall depart ; the poor ye have always with you, but Me ye have not always." And it is much to be observed how our Lord, though fully aware of the traitor's character and intentions in thus rebuking the good Mary, yet does not accuse him nor expose him, nor even allude to the wickedness of his motives ;—not a word of all that the Psalmist says of him, that "his eyes" were, as even at that very time, "set against the poor,"

though smoother than the oil of charity were his words. Our Lord interferes only meekly to expostulate in defence of the woman he reproves. And perhaps the words addressed to the disciples contain some advice to ourselves, that we should not be scrutinizing and weighing too nicely the propriety or advisableness of actions which could be done from none other but a good motive. "Why trouble ye the woman?" "she hath done a good work," "she hath done what she could." "She had approached Him," says St. Chrysostom, "with much reverence and earnestness unspeakable." The very costliness indeed proved the intensity of her zeal, which must have occasioned her to feel much such a repulse on the part of the disciples; for they, as the same writer observes, were full of high thoughts of charity, and ought rather meekly to have encouraged than rudely to stifle such efforts of a humble piety. And with regard to the good Mary herself, how did the words of our Lord hallow and exalt the action by this allusion to His burial, filling it in that respect also with a mysterious consolation for herself hereafter! For, knowing that she would be prevented from that last privilege of doing honour to His mortal remains, He shows that what she now did was a mystery, in embalming, though she knew it not, His Body for the grave. Thus the humble actions of good Christians, done for God, and with a kind of instinctive sense of what may be pleasing to Him, and although they may be for the time like bread thrown upon the waters, yet bear onward to the future with some secret significancy; and because they are reproved by the world, are magnified and honoured by Christ. Great indeed was the action, and great the honour done unto it; "*Verily I say unto you,*" says our Lord, "*wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in*" (or "*to*" Mark) "*the whole world, this also that this woman*

hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her" (Matt. Mark). How full of prophecy, and yet how searching to all present are our Lord's words, not only "having eyes before and after," but also "round about," trying the reins of each and all around, though they appear to go "straightforward!" So was it with these; they seem to be a simple prophecy of the establishment of our Lord's Kingdom, looking straightforward to things future, but full of power also at that time. For as our Lord takes this occasion of forewarning His disciples of His approaching sufferings, which He had now been for some time taking every opportunity of doing,—they, together with the good Mary, might have been cast down by this melancholy prediction, so often repeated, respecting His death; to them, therefore, the words are full of encouragement, speaking of a Divine power beyond the grave, and of His Gospel extending throughout the whole world. This tender consideration of our Lord for Mary is noticed by St. Chrysostom, who observes, that as our Lord "had spoken of burial and death, that He might not cast her into sadness, He again adds these words of consolation." To Judas also the same words spoke very awfully if he had but ears to hear; for if the mention of our Lord's death was such as might move his sympathy and concern, these were words that might move his fears. So deeply and wonderfully do our Lord's sayings wrap us around on every side. However we change our position, our designs, our actions, His word has eyes that are looking on us round about, and their expression varies according to the thoughts of him on whom those eyes are fixed. And let us observe what the nature of the action is which our Lord selects as the one of all others that shall receive an earthly memorial. It is one done, as it were in secret, in a private room; it is an expression not

of want, not of personal need, but a free and spontaneous act of thanksgiving; it is one that has no purpose but that of doing honour to our Lord, not only not to please men, but even in spite of their reproof and condemnation—the free-will offering of a broken heart and deep reverential love. It is one that seeks not honour of men, and therefore shall receive it. Thus, as St. Chrysostom observes, “while the victories of many kings and generals are lost in silence, and many who have founded states and reduced nations to subjection are not known by reputation or by name, the pouring of ointment by this woman in the house of a certain leper, where twelve men were present, is celebrated throughout the whole world. Time hath passed by, but the memory of the deed which she hath done hath not waned away.” “But Persians,” he adds, “and Indians, and Scythians, and Thracians, and Sauro-matæ, and the race of the Mauritanians, *and they who inhabit the British Isles*, publish abroad an act which was done in Judea privately in a house by a woman⁴.” With how much greater force may these words of St. Chrysostom be now repeated, even than that which they had when they were first written? But to the poor penitent herself it was something better than it sounded to others; for her Lord’s gracious acceptance was a pledge to her broken-hearted spirit of something better than an earthly name—the fragrance of that good deed in this sense may be said to have filled not only earth, but also Heaven; as the word of praise from Christ is the breath of immortality in Heaven. But the very embalming of our Lord’s Body has a life and substance given it which such works have not in themselves: what we do faintly, and in shadow and figure, becomes in Him some great reality; we would embalm dead bodies as

⁴ Hom. in Matt. lxxx.

if to preserve them from corruption, but this holy woman embalms for the burial a living Body which can never die. Neither this devout act of embalming, nor the Body embalmed for burial, shall decay or depart. This ointment shall never lose its fragrance. The hairs which have ministered to this good deed shall never be grey.

In what way can the spirit shown and accepted in this action be imitated by us? Money laid out upon Christ's Church seems in some sense like the embalming of His own Body below; and even when expended on the material fabric it may partake of this blessing. The costliness of such offerings the covetous murmur at, and even weak disciples are carried away by their dissimulation. That the circumstance may be so applied—to sanction such expenses—is evident from this that the highest act of almsgiving on record, as stamped with our Lord's acceptance, is that of the poor widow's mite, which was given for the Temple's service. His approbation also is given in both instances upon similar grounds; in the one case it is, "she hath done what she could;" in the other, "she hath spent all the living that she had." Costly offerings to Almighty God of themselves are as nothing; the meanest or the noblest temple ever built to His Glory are equally acceptable to Him, if both be alike according to the means of the worshippers. But to be so accepted it must be the case that "they have done what they could." It is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.

Our Blessed Lord's words in accepting this good deed seem to allow of such application to other religious actions. The expression "ye have the poor always with you, but Me ye have not always," St. Cyril of Alexandria thinks, over and above the occasion on which it was

used, contains also for us a rule of religious observance ; that though love for the poor is a thing of the very highest value, yet the worship of God is to be preferred before it :—and that it is here said as a part of the great Divine dispensation, not as hindering the merciful from charity to the poor :—that when it is the appointed season for worship and Divine service, we must set this before such charitable duties as may be performed at any time. And, indeed, beyond these observations of St. Cyril it is evident ; for the highest value ever set on charity to the poor is in that promise which considers what is done to the poor as done to Christ ; from this very expression it of course follows that what is done to Christ Himself, is of all things the highest and best.

Moreover, with regard to this action it may be observed, that the evil eye of the wicked only serves to do honour to God's servants, for had it not been for the reproof of Judas, it had not been thus known and honoured ; yea, the very words of his condemnation of her are to her perpetual honour, for he has told us of the value of her magnificent action, "it might have been sold for three hundred pence." And his own conduct that ensued was the very means of publishing it for ever abroad, for it is on account of his treason that such mention is made of it. Thus it is written, "the fierceness of man shall turn to thy praise⁵." The enmity of the wicked is made ultimately to do honour to those servants of God whom they would disparage.

It appears clear that it was this circumstance that provoked Judas to the treachery, and that it was from this occasion on the previous Saturday that the evil intention was harboured in his mind until the following

⁵ Ps. lxxvi. 10.

Wednesday, when the same evil spirit found him an opportunity for fulfilling it. All accounts attribute the action to covetousness; at first sight we might have attributed it to malice or envy, which must any how have had a great share in his conduct⁶. But Scripture usually goes into the more secret causes of things, for malice or envy often owe their rise altogether to covetousness, which is of a nature extremely subtle and powerful—and these are but the shapes in which it is developed—in feelings against those who stand in our way to prevent the attainment of any covetous wish. It may, perhaps, arise from what our Lord says, that an evil spirit, when he obtains powerful access into the heart, will enter in, not alone, but with seven other spirits more wicked than himself.

It is much to be observed, not only how constantly and continually our Lord keeps warning him, both when his crime approaches nearer to its consummation at the last Supper, and apparently long before; but also that these warnings are not open and palpable—but for the most part in a covert way—as St. Chrysostom notices, in a manner such as might be called that of Reserve. And this appears precisely analogous to His mode of warning us in His moral Providence and spiritual kingdom, disclosing His hidden knowledge from time to time in gentle warnings; showing thereby that He “spieth out all our ways;” but not openly checking our free will by any strong and avowed appeal. This quiet and gentle nature of our Lord’s reproofs was such as not even to afford the disciples any intimation of the traitor’s character, while he appeared so intimately one of themselves. Here he is, not only as one of the disciples, but one

⁶ See Passion, p. 170.

whom they do not suspect; his suggestions are taken up by them, and perhaps made their own, and those suggestions are of goodness and charity. How many things, and how many principles may be contained in this wonderful mystery of iniquity? It is enough to observe, he is one of the Apostles, taught by our Lord Himself, the companion of St. John and St. Peter, and his fall is covetousness. We have no vice, the consequences of which are set before us in Holy Scripture in so awakening and fearful a manner as this sin; as by the rich man disclosed in Hell-flames, and that other rich man whose soul was suddenly required of him while building new barns—and by this fall of Judas—and the awful deaths of Ananias and Sapphira—whose sin also was covetousness at heart with the plea of piety. In all these instances there is something of an especially alarming and startling nature; more than the warnings on the subject of any other sin, probably on account of the exceeding “deceivableness” attributed to it. And it seems especially set before us in Ministers of religion, or those connected with sacred persons—as in Judas—and of old in Balaam, and in Gehazi—and in Simon Magus—and in those St. Paul has spoken of, who “teach things they ought not for filthy lucre’s sake,” and “men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness”—and St. Peter, who “through covetousness shall with feigned words make merchandize” of Christ’s flock; and St. Jude, who have “ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward.” To any one who would study the Divine philosophy, contained in these prognostications, it will be impossible not to notice to what an extent the Church now suffers from this vice. “The Church,” says Bishop Wilson, “has not had worse

enemies than such as have been raised to estates out of her patrimony." This case of Judas turns our attention more especially, not to the open and palpable instances of this vice, so much as to its secret influence, such as may be compatible with holding a place in the Temple of God, and not being suspected. But to all alike, no doubt, does this sad example speak. "Hear all ye lovers of money," says Chrysostom, "ye that have the disease of Judas, hear ye and watch against this passion. For if one who lived with Christ, and worked miracles, and had the benefit of such instruction, because he was not disengaged from this malady, was carried on into so vast a gulf; how much more shall ye who listen not to the Scriptures, who at all times are riveted to things present, be found an easy prey to this passion, without unceasing watchfulness? Every day was he together with Him who had not where to lay His head; every day was he taught by Him, by works and by words, to possess neither silver nor gold, nor two coats; and yet he was not corrected. How then canst thou expect to escape this malady without great attention and care?"

SECTION IV

THE MORNING OF PALM SUNDAY

It was probably on this evening, on which the supper was taking place, that the news had reached Jerusalem of our Lord's arrival at Bethany, and at this very supper itself, that the great interest is excited to see the dead

⁷ Hom. in Matt. lxxx.

man with his Deliverer. And as such a sensation and the curiosity attending it would continue to increase, it seems likely to be on the following morning also, that is to say, the morning after the Sabbath, or our Sunday, that St. John speaks of, when he says, "*Now a great multitude of the Jews knew that He was there. And they came, not on account of Jesus only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom He had raised from the dead.*" Nor need we confine the account in St. John to this period of our Lord's arrival only, for the sight of Lazarus would have been an object of attraction on the preceding days also, as the Jews flocked to Jerusalem for the Feast. It was therefore of this circumstance generally, that the Evangelist spoke when he adds, "*But the Chief Priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that on his account many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus*" (John).

The scene and manner of our Lord's conduct is now entirely changed from what it was; here was the most astonishing of His miracles done publicly, and so far from retiring, as He had always done, from the objects and witnesses of His wonderful works, He is now openly with him in the sight of all men. The effect also is most remarkable; for the greatest of all miracles only hardens more and more the heart of unbelief, and adds to the condemnation of unprepared hearts; so in all things "the stone," which to "the elect is precious,"—and "marvellous in the eyes" of them that believe,—is to the unbelieving "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence." It is to be observed, that they do not in any way attempt to deny the miracle; nor do they act as if they disbelieved it; for it was on hearing from the by-standers a circumstantial account of that miracle, that they held a council to put

Him to death. The effect is unaccountable according to the laws of human reason, like the conduct of Judas in betraying a Master whose wonderful power he had witnessed ; but although so inexplicable to human reason, it is the most common of all occurrences, for such is the case whenever men fight against God and think they shall prevail.

There is no reason to believe that a day intervened after this supper before our Lord's festal entrance into Jerusalem ; on the contrary, St. John, after speaking of the supper, says "on the morrow," when he proceeds to speak of His going to Jerusalem ; and it appears more probable that our Lord should proceed on the first day after His arrival to present Himself before God in His temple. And as this entrance was evidently, from what St. Mark mentions, in the evening, there would be time enough during that morning, for all that is recorded, —of the Jews coming to Bethany from Jerusalem, and of the intelligence reaching Jerusalem of our Lord's coming. This would also necessarily follow if the supper spoken of was on Saturday, for general tradition has marked the event as being on "Palm Sunday" (as it is celebrated indeed in the Breviaries). The circumstance too itself remarkably harmonizes both with the spirit of the Lord's day, and with some other events which may be supposed to have taken place on our Sunday. The confession of our Lord's Divinity by St. Peter, the doctrine on which His Church is built ;—the Transfiguration, which took place the same day in the following week, which He spoke of as the coming of His kingdom, and which an eye-witness, St. Peter, calls the beholding of His Majesty ; —and the Sermon on the Mount also, are all events which it is not unlikely might have occurred on the

Lord's day. We know at all events that Christ's Resurrection, and the sending of His Holy Spirit, and likewise St. John's seeing in the Spirit the things concerning the kingdom, did happen on this day. Each of these circumstances was in some sense the coming of His kingdom; and so also was this His entry into Jerusalem. It seems not improbable that all these may have occurred on the Lord's day, as some of them we know did so. And there is something in this His peaceable entry into His city and His temple, and taking on Him His authority as King, peculiarly suited to mark the Lord's day: such were all the circumstances attending it,—of the "blind and the lame" being healed in the temple,—"the children" singing thanksgiving,—the Pharisees' disputing,—the Greeks being brought to see Jesus,—and the great Voice from Heaven. All these things harmonize with the calm and quiet gladness of the Lord's day, this Great Sunday, as we may suppose it to be.

There seems at all events reason to conclude that this entrance into Jerusalem takes place on the day after our Lord's arrival at Bethany, which St. John speaks of as being "six days before the Passover," and this event as being "on the next day" after the supper. Add to which it is supposed, for other reasons, that our Lord's entrance was on the fifth day before the Passover. For it has been thought that our Lord's going to the temple, and presenting Himself before God, corresponded with the oblation and consecration of the great Paschal Lamb, which was set apart on the tenth day of the month of Nisan (on the fourteenth of which was the Passover), and brought to the city of Jerusalem with great pomp and solemnity on that day¹. And the opinion has been

¹ See Dr. Jackson's Works, vol. ii. bk. vii. § 3.

before alluded to, of those who consider that the supper at Bethany was a feast that was customary before the day of setting apart the Lamb. St. Chrysostom says², "It was a precept of the law, that on the tenth day of the first month, the Lamb or kid was shut up in the house until the fourteenth day of the same month, when it was slain in the evening. Wherefore also the True Lamb, chosen without spot out of all the flock to be slain for the sanctification of the people, five days before, that is, on the tenth day, goeth up to Jerusalem." And this is a circumstance in itself more important, as bearing on these transactions, than another which Lightfoot observes from Maimonides, viz. that the Saturday evening, when the Sabbath was over, was usually a time of feasting: but this also is not irrelevant nor unimportant in fixing the time of these occurrences. For indeed the tenth day, that of setting aside the Lamb, might induce some to conclude that this going to the temple must have taken place on the Monday; and if so, we must suppose, for the same reasons, that our Lord's coming to Bethany, and the supper there, was on the Sunday. It must be allowed that this may have been the case; and that there is more than one reason which would seem to favour such a supposition. The expression of St. John, that it was six days before the Passover, when our Lord comes to Bethany, and is received with this feast, would very well agree with its being Sunday, if by the Passover he means the Friday following. For on another occasion³, by the expression "after eight days," he designates the interval of from Sunday to Sunday; and according to this computation the six days here specified would signify from Sunday to Friday, and not from Saturday. To

² Hom. in Matt. lxxxiv.

³ Ch. xx. 26.

which may be added another apparent difficulty in our present arrangement ; that if the house of Zaccheus, where we suppose our Lord to spend the Sabbath, was at Jericho, it seems difficult to suppose that our Lord should pass from Jericho to Bethany, after the Sabbath was over on Saturday evening. But still, this is not quite impossible ; and besides, it is by no means evident that the house of Zaccheus was in Jericho. All that can be said is that there appears, upon the whole, a greater degree of authority for acquiescing in the Saturday evening as the time of this feast. With regard to St. John's expression of "six days," the fact is, that this question seems involved in a similar difficulty to that of the Passover itself, whether it occurred on the Thursday of the Eucharist, or on the Friday of the Crucifixion. Perhaps in both cases the difficulty may be overcome by our considering the Jewish, or rather we should say the sacred, method of computation, according to which "the evening and the morning" make one day. Now it is evident that it was on the evening of the day when our Lord visited the temple, which evening may be considered therefore to be the commencement of what we look upon as the succeeding day, which appears to have been the tenth of the month Nisan. In the same manner, if Friday was the fourteenth day, on which the Passover must be slain, that day also must have commenced on the preceding evening of Thursday ; and therefore six days before would correspond with the Saturday evening, according to the early scriptural mode of reckoning days⁴.

⁴ Or "six days" may merely signify a week, compare Matt. xvii. 1, with Luke ix. 28. In which case the Sabbath may have intervened, after the arrival at Bethany, before the supper ; and yet the supper have taken place on the evening of that day. [This, on consideration,

SECTION V

THE PROCESSION FROM BETHANY

It was now, therefore, on the Sunday afternoon that our Lord was prepared to proceed to Jerusalem in a manner, as was before observed, quite different to what He had ever done on any previous occasion. He who before this time appears to have avoided being with those on whom He had wrought miracles, has now been sitting at meat with Lazarus. He who before had avoided the crowd who had witnessed His works, is now staying where the people flock to behold Him, and, together with Him, the object of the most astonishing of His miracles. And above all things, now when they are all moved by this manifestation of His power, He is preparing to go forth amongst them.

It is, indeed, awful to reflect how often the greater manifestations of Christ are in judgment. "After the Lord," says St. Chrysostom, "has afforded sufficient proof of His power, and the Cross was near at hand, at the door; He does all things with greater openness, which would have the effect of inflaming His adversaries; and, therefore, though oftentimes before He had gone up to Jerusalem, yet never with display as now¹." And Theophylact², "That if they would, they might acknowledge His glory, and by means of the Prophecies fulfilled concerning Him seems most probable; and that St. John, by the expression "before the six days of the Passover," merely means, "before the Paschal week." *2nd Edit.*]

¹ Hom. in Matt. lxvii.

² In Marc. 11.

might know that He is the true God. But if they would not, their judgment would be greater, in that they believed not so many manifest miracles." It has been noticed in another place³, that the period of time from which our Lord appears to have acted with this boldness and openness, different to what He had done before, was the day when St. Peter acknowledged His Divinity; and more decidedly as His appointed time drew to its close, and "He had set His face stedfastly to go to Jerusalem," and still more so afterwards when He advanced to meet the Crucifixion with a boldness so striking as He approached Jerusalem, that it is said, "He went before them, and they were amazed, and as they followed Him they were afraid." This, therefore, our Lord's conduct now, appears to be a fuller development of the same. Until now His coming had been "as it were in secret," and as one avoiding persecution; on this occasion it was openly and conspicuously, as one prepared to meet it; not to meet it with opposition or means of self-preservation, but in meekness and as a victim prepared to die:—even as He had sent forth His own, and does to this day, as lambs in the midst of wolves. For this was at a time when His enemies had determined in council on His death; and He had friends increasing in number sufficient to draw their more decided attention towards Him. The news of His coming had now reached Jerusalem, for it was but two miles from Bethany. "*On the morrow,*" says St. John, "*a great multitude which had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet Him.*"

The other Evangelists mention the mode and circumstances of His coming, but as they do not insert in this

³ Study of Gospels, pp. 353—355.

part of the history the supper on the previous evening, but are merely proceeding in the account from Jericho, they make no allusion to His stay at Bethany, but only speak of His arrival there as in going to Jerusalem, and connect with it Bethphage (a village of the Priests, at the brow of the Mount of Olives, and about a mile from the City), through which our Lord had to pass in going from Bethany to Jerusalem. "*And it came to pass*" (Luke) "*as they drew near to Jerusalem*" (Matt. Mark), "*when He was come nigh*" (Luke), "*and they had now come*" (Matt.) "*to Bethphage*" (Matt. Mark, Luke) "*and Bethany*" (Mark, Luke), "*to the Mount (called that,*" Luke), "*of Olives, then He (Jesus,*" Matt.) *sendeth forth two of His disciples*" (Matt. Mark, Luke).

The number "two" seems especially used on these occasions with, no doubt, some appropriate fitness; thus two are sent to prepare for the last Supper,—the Seventy are sent out two by two,—and the Apostles are always thus enumerated⁴. So had it been before: "two Angels came to Sodom at even," two leaders bring forth the Israelites from Egypt, two spies are sent to survey the promised land. Two is, indeed, of itself an incomplete number, and seems to require a third always for its perfection, and as it were to wait for a third. It may be that in these missions, if we may say it with reverence, that the Spirit of Christ goes with them; so as either by harmony to unite the two into one, as being one mission; or, if the separate persons are considered, to make them three. Such was the case when Christ came to join the two disciples going to Emmaus, and "went with them," and as always "where two (or three) are gathered together" in His Name, there is He in the midst of them. Thus there

⁴ See Ministry, 2nd Year, p. 317.

are two Cherubims over the Ark, but God is as it were between them; there are two poles that bear the Ark, but the Ark is as a third within them, or one with them; there are two Tables of stone, but by the Love they imply they are made one, or there are three objects, if Moses, the Lawgiver, who bears them, is taken into the account; there are two spies, but the vine-branch is borne between them; and thus these two disciples are made one by Christ, Who is with them; or else are three, if taken apart, together with Christ. Or they would be three if taken together with that holy and (surely) blessed animal, chosen of God, which they lead to Christ, and on which Christ rides. Or, again, as one Evangelist tells us, these animals also themselves were two in number, according to some mystery; but they wait for Him whom they are to bear in meekness to Jerusalem—Him who is over all—God blessed for evermore.

These two disciples our Lord sends forth. "*He saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). This village appears to have been Bethphage, which accounts for the Evangelists introducing the name, and coupling it with Bethany, to denote its position by the contiguous village better known in Scripture; or, indeed, Bethany might be the district, for the word Bethany in St. Luke⁵ seems the same as Mount Olivet in the Acts of the Apostles⁶. "*And straightway*" (Matt., Mark) "*as ye enter in*" (Mark, Luke) "*ye shall find*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*an ass tied and a colt with her*" (Matt.), "*a colt*" (Mark, Luke) "*tied, on which no man ever yet hath sat*" (Mark, Luke), "*loose and bring*" (Matt., Mark, Luke; "*him,*" Mark, Luke) them "*to Me.*" (Matt.) A discrepancy may be here observed between

⁵ Luke xxiv. 50.

⁶ Acts i. 12.

St. Matthew and the other Evangelists, in that the three latter mention only the colt, on which our Lord sat, whereas St. Matthew mentions also the ass, as if it were the mother of the colt; it may probably have been the case that the one could not be led away without the other accompanying it. In whatever manner the circumstance may have occurred, humanly speaking, we may be sure that nothing is related without a Divine significancy in one Gospel, or passed over in the others. St. Matthew alone mentions the Prophecy which had foretold this circumstance, thus accurately fulfilled (although St. John also alludes to it), and therefore St. Matthew with propriety records the exact fulfilment. The whole transaction, thus pre-ordained, probably contains some great mysterious meanings, as the Fathers, with one consent, seem to suppose; and therefore the slightest variation in the accounts is probably replete with some great object and purport. Indeed we can scarcely doubt, that there is an allusion to this same allegory in the prophecy respecting the coming of Shiloh, in the dying words of Jacob, that "unto Him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding His foal unto the vine, and His ass's colt unto the choice vine;"—which choice vine is of course, as always, put to signify the Christian Church. The ass which had known the yoke may represent the Jewish nation, accustomed to the yoke of the Law, and the "colt on which no man had ever yet sat" (as it is said with some mysterious intimation) the Gentile, which could not be brought without the Jew who had been under the Law; on this colt our Lord rode;—for the Gentile took His bridle into the mouth and received Him. All this would account for St. Matthew, who wrote for the Hebrews, alone mentioning the ass,

⁷ Gen. xlix. 10, 11.

which accompanied the colt. This would give a Divine meaning also to the accidental mention of St. Mark, that they found him at a place "where two roads met;" for here the two courses of God's Providence, which separated the Gentiles from the Jews met together; here "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Here then the Apostles, to whom it was given to bind and to loose, brought the untamed Gentile unto Christ; on which He is riding, as it were, to the Heavenly Jerusalem. It may be observed, that it is distinctly specified it was the colt on which our Lord sat; or, as St. John says, the "little ass;" and St. Mark and St. Luke record that our Lord's words, when He sent for it, were "a colt on which no man yet hath sat." It has been noticed, that St. Matthew only, the Evangelist of the Hebrews, mentions the ass in addition to the colt; St. Augustin thinks that there was likewise this difference in the prophecy he refers to, as it occurs in the Hebrew and in the Septuagint version; and that the Septuagint translation being under the same Divine control that inspired the original Scriptures, changed its expressions, as most suited to convey the Divine purpose and intention. And therefore St. John, we may observe, in referring to the same prophecy, only makes mention of the colt.

Indeed the very circumstance of the two asses being mentioned, since we cannot perceive the purpose of the two, naturally turns our attention to some mystical meaning. To attribute it to the length of the way, says Origen, is to find therein nothing worthy of the economy of God in the account of the ass and the colt, for the necessity of the journey is no reasonable plea on so short a distance; and in the next place how would two beasts be needful? Yet, as St. Chrysostom well observes of the

circumstance, "it is not merely on account of the mystery that our Lord rode on the ass, but in order to afford us a lesson of humility and wisdom;" but he fully expresses his opinion that it did contain the mystery, which indeed he explains at length. So that this action of our Lord's was in itself prophetic, as it was also fulfilling prophecy⁸. St. Chrysostom, as well as Origen, Ambrose, and others, consider the loosing of the colt to refer to the power of bringing unto Him, or of binding and loosing, which our Lord gave His Apostles. It is "the Apostolic hand that unbinds," says St. Ambrose; and on the words, "they said as Jesus had commanded them," he adds, "it is in order that we may know it is not by their own discourse, but by His words;—not in their own name, but in the name of Christ⁹." The ass is likewise explained or alluded to by Justin, Ambrose, and St. Athanasius, as implying the Jews, the colt the Christians. It is spoken of by Origen as the received interpretation. The binding of the ass is the Jewish Law, and it is Christ that looses. For the colt expresses the ignorance of the Gentiles. Thus also Patristic writers seem to think, that the two disciples who were sent, signify one sent to the Circumcision, and the other to the Gentiles: and their clothes, which the disciples laid on the animals, to mean the preaching of Evangelists¹, or the Apostolic and Ecclesiastical doctrines, with which the soul must be arrayed, that it may have the Lord to sit thereon. Origen has a reflection not unlike to this. St. Augustin also says, "We understand the colt on which no man had sat to be the people of the Gentiles, who had not received the Law of God; the ass to be the people who came out of Israel."

⁸ Hom. lxvi.

⁹ Exp. in Luc. ad loc.

¹ Ambrose ad loc.

“Who is he that is ‘without,’” says Origen, “but they of the Gentiles who were strangers to the Covenants and aliens from the promises of God; at the place where two roads met, not resting under a roof or house, but bound in their own sins²?” “He that is external to Christ is without,” says St. Ambrose, “for Christ is the door.” Theophylact mentions that the colt was not necessary, but that the Lord required it to show the calling of the Gentiles. Apollinaris interprets it all in the same mystical way, merely adding that it was on the colt that our Lord rode, which indeed is evident, and that the ass followed. St. Cyril of Alexandria, who explains it in a similar manner, speaks (as does also St. Chrysostom) of the ass that followed, as implying that the Synagogue of the Jews would follow after the Gentiles in its own time, though the last had become first by the colt preceding. He also says³, “that it could not be for the distance that our Lord needed the ass, nor on account of the crowd, but that He did it to set before us the new, and as yet untamed people from the Gentiles, which He would control and lead to righteousness and the Heavenly Jerusalem, of which the earthly was the type,—into which entereth the people rendered pure by Christ together with Christ, Who is sung of by innocent Angels, whom the infants here represent.” Thus do ancient writers explain all these circumstances, in a manner more or less similar, showing that it was either an interpretation that had descended to them; or at all events it was one that naturally approved itself to their minds.

Quesnel applies these incidents in the same spiritual manner. “This colt,” he says, “is a figure of the Gentiles, a people without any yoke or law, to whom Christ was

² In Joan. tom. x. 18.

³ In Joan. Evan. lib. vii.

to send His Apostles." He also mentions the sending of the Apostles as a proof of the necessity of a mission from Christ; and well adds, in reference to these things, "God is pleased to represent His greater designs to us by the meanest and lowest things; as the conversion of the nations, the framing of His Church, and the sanctification of souls bound and held captive by sin, are represented by what passes here. The work of God is a work of humility⁴." And afterwards he says, "It is not through want of power, but through mystery, that Christ chooses to be assisted by His Apostles. He thereby teaches us that it is the part of ministers to prepare souls for Him; to be workers together with Him in engaging men to bear the yoke of the Gospel."

"*And if any one shall say to you*" (Matt., Mark) "*any thing*" (Matt.), "*or and if any one ask you*" (Luke) "*why do ye this?*" (Mark;) "*why loose ye the colt?*" (Luke;) "*thus shall ye say unto him. that the Lord hath need*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*of it*" (Mark, Luke), "*or of them*" (Matt.); *and immediately he will send*" (Matt., Mark) "*them*" (Matt.) "*or him hither*" (Mark). Thus did our Lord, in assuming His meek sovereignty, show that the hearts of men were in His hand; and though He submitted to indignity from others, yet in such hearts would He establish His kingdom, and reign in meekness. For the preparations of the heart are from Him; and as when He needed a room for the Passover He foresaw who would afford it, and how and where he was to be found; so now also did He know who was worthy of this honour, and willing to grant what He needed. And by this action, says St. Chrysostom, He taught His disciples that He Who disposed the hearts of these owners to grant

⁴ On St. Luke xix.

what He needed in silence, might, if He had pleased, have restrained the Jews. But the fact is, that none can be His subjects but the meek and obedient, for none can discern Him as King but the obedient and meek-hearted.

Indeed His word had gone forth of old that so it should be, and all things as He had appointed arrange themselves in time and order to fulfil His commands, as St. Matthew proceeds to point out. *"All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass."*

"And they that were sent" (Luke), *"the disciples"* (Matt.), *"departed"* (Matt., Mark, Luke), *"and found"* (Mark, Luke) *"as He had said unto them"* (Luke), *"the colt tied by the door, without, in a place where two ways met"* (Mark). This incidental minuteness of detail in St. Mark seems to indicate that St. Peter himself, the reputed superintendent of this Gospel, must have been (as on the other occasion on the following Thursday) one of the two who were sent on this office. For they appear to be the remarks of one who himself must have taken part in the action, which he is led by the over-ruling control of God so accurately to detail, though he might not have known the full import of what He was recording. *"And they loose him: and"* (Mark) *"as they were loosing the colt"* (Luke), *"certain persons who stood there"* (Mark), *"the masters of it"* (Luke), *"said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?"* (Mark;) or *"why loose ye the colt?"* (Luke;) *"and they said"* (Mark, Luke) *"unto them"* (Luke), *"as Jesus had commanded them"* (Mark); *"The Lord hath need of it"* (Luke); *"and they let him*

go" (Mark). "*And having done as Jesus had commanded them*" (Matt.), "*they brought*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*the ass and*" (Matt.) "*the colt*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*to Jesus*" (Mark, Luke), "*and having cast their garments*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*on them*" (Matt.; "*him,*" Mark, Luke), "*they placed Jesus thereon*" (Luke), "*and He sat*" (Matt., Mark, John) "*on them*" (Matt.), or "*on it*" (Mark, John).

The ass and the ass's colt had indeed been connected with dignity, as it is said in the triumphant description of the Judges in earlier times, "Ye that ride on white asses;" and it is spoken of one as an honourable distinction, that "he had thirty sons who rode on thirty ass-colts⁵." Such mention of this animal in more simple times seems a predictive designation of it as connected with our Lord's sovereignty, Who was peculiarly the Judge of His people. Yet although this animal had been so far a sign of authority, yet was it more especially the emblem of humility. Indeed it seems to have contained thus in itself these two apparently opposite attributes. In the latter view more especially it seems to be mentioned in the Prophet. He comes "not driving chariots," says St. Chrysostom⁶, "like other kings, not demanding tribute, not striking terror, and with armed attendants, but in this manner showing His abundant gentleness. Ask therefore the Jew what king hath come to Jerusalem riding on an ass?" In another place St. Chrysostom speaks of it as an act of humility on the part of our Lord, in order to set at nought human pride, and to teach us in all things to adopt the humblest mode of life. Indeed the word "meek" is from the Septuagint; the expression in the Hebrew is, I believe, "poor," but

⁵ Judges v. 10; x. 4.

⁶ Hom. in Matt. lxvi.

of course signifies "poor in spirit," or "meek." This animal is one which, among all nations is especially doomed to sufferance, and the emblem of patient endurance. Nor would it in any way lessen the force of higher considerations to suppose, that this may have been one reason why it was thus selected by our Lord, to do honour to it. And surely, with all thoughtful persons a consideration of the events of this day, and this sacred connexion with our Lord, would always be a touching motive for using this creature with something of more than ordinary kindness. It may have had a reference to this Divine dispensation in our Lord's history that this animal had been allowed of old to see the Angel, when the avaricious prophet could not, and was thought worthy to find a voice to rebuke him. Whereas the more noble animal, the horse, as ministering to human pride, does not appear to be praised in Scripture, nor selected for Divine purposes, but the contrary. It is connected with Pharaoh and Sennacherib, "the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea⁷," and "at Thy rebuke both the chariot and the horse are fallen⁸," and "woe to them that go down to Egypt and stay on horses⁹!" The celebrated description of the horse in Job¹ is all of war; "his neck is clothed with thunder," and "he rejoices in the sound of the trumpet." The very contrast to all this, the description of the horse, is this meek animal; and therefore it is said to Jerusalem, Fear not. "Fear not, but feel confidence," says St. Chrysostom; "it is not as the unjust and warlike kings of the world, but one meek and gentle, which He shows by the ass, for He cometh not with an army, but with the ass alone." It is indeed this

⁷ Exod. xv. 1.

⁹ Isa. xxxi. 1.

Ps. lxxvi. 6.

¹ Ch. xxxix. 19.

very promise of His coming which adds, "and I will cut off the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off²:" as if this His meekness, signified by the ass, was the exertion of His great Kingly power in breaking to pieces the violence and pride of earthly kingdoms. It was setting visibly before our eyes, as in a figure, the nature of His kingdom, which consists in humility. This His meekness is His greatness, the greatness not of the kings of the earth, but the greatness of the King of Heaven. "For what great matter is it," says St. Augustin³, "for the King of eternity to become the King of men? For Christ, the King of Israel, cometh not to exact tribute, nor to arm troops with the sword, but He is the King of Israel, that He may rule men's minds, and lead them to the kingdom of heaven. His wish therefore to be King is condescension, not advancement,—a sign of commiseration, not an argument of power. For He who is called on earth the King of the Jews, is in Heaven the Lord of Angels."

Thus was the Prince of Peace advancing towards His own Imperial City. And the last Evangelist, who probably himself took a great part in these transactions, refers to this prophecy, which St. Matthew had recorded, as if for the purpose of informing us that the disciples were themselves quite ignorant, at the time, that they were so mysteriously fulfilling that prophecy; until the veil was rent in twain at Christ's death; and the Comforter was sent, Who should "bring all things to their remembrance." *"And Jesus, having found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. But these things understood not His disciples at the first; but*

² Zech. ix. 10.

³ In Joan. Tr. li. 4.

when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him" (John). The prophecy, indeed, like most others in the Gospels, is perhaps rather to be considered as alluded to both by St. John and St. Matthew, than fully included in the words they quote; and the sentences with which they introduce it, appear to be those of the Evangelists themselves rather than those of the Prophets to whom they refer. "Tell ye the daughter of Sion," says St. Matthew; "Fear not, daughter of Sion," says St. John: whereas, instead of these words, in the prophet Zechariah we read, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem." May it not be that these words of the Prophet "rejoice greatly" were omitted by the Evangelists on account of some mysterious import in the expression beyond what, to all appearances, was now fulfilled in that earthly Jerusalem? For how could it be said to her to "rejoice greatly," when our Lord wept over her, and said unto them soon after, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children"? Yet, doubtless, the spiritual Jerusalem which is above, which is free, and "the mother of us all," was called upon to "rejoice greatly," and to "shout aloud" at all those glorious things which that chapter describes. She, or rather the daughter of Sion,—for Sion is itself the holiest part of Jerusalem, the Church of the faithful, which belongeth unto the Heavenly Jerusalem;—she, the true daughter of Sion, is indeed called on to rejoice. For, as the Prophet commences this description, "for now have I seen with mine eyes," and as he proceeds afterwards, "rejoice, O daughter of Zion. . . . I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut

off, and He shall speak peace unto the heathen⁴." While others weep, the Jerusalem which is above may "rejoice," and "shout aloud," together with those babes in the Temple, the children whom Angels and Saints watch over. It may moreover be observed, that as our Lord is now coming as King and to claim His kingdom, that one of His attributes is selected from prophecy, to which alone of the Beatitudes the promise of an earthly inheritance is attached. "Thy King cometh unto thee meek!" and His subjects, they to whom He has said, "Learn of Me, for I am meek;" they shall reign with Him; for to them it is said, that "blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." And though He came as one "that goeth on his way weeping," in that now on the way He wept over His own City, yet nevertheless to His spiritual Jerusalem it might be said "rejoice greatly," for in this, as in all things else, was He the perfect pattern of that character to which His own blessing is given. "Blessed are ye that weep;" "blessed are they that mourn." And the reason is, because "He that now goeth on his way weeping shall doubtless come again with joy, and bring His sheaves," those whom He will gather into His barn, "with Him." They therefore that weep with Him are blessed, and in this their blessedness may "rejoice greatly." Though He came persecuted, and to die, yet to such who are "persecuted for righteousness' sake," He has said "rejoice and be exceeding glad:" so that, even now, He could call on the true Israel to rejoice at the coming of her King; as the Prophet had said, "rejoice greatly," or as the Evangelist, "fear not." For He comes not now as He had been foretold, and as He has been so often described in the Prophets and the Psalms, with the terrors

⁴ Zech. ix. 8—10.

of Mount Sinai, with that terrible voice which they entreated not to hear again⁵, but the "Prophet from among their brethren," a man like themselves, as God then promised, "a prophet like unto Moses," meek and patient;—meek and riding on an ass's colt.

SECTION VI

THE DESCENT OF THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

AND now "*as He was going*" (Luke), "*many*" (Mark), and indeed "*a very great multitude*" (Matt.), "*strewed their garments in the way*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) after the manner of receiving an Eastern King or Conqueror, "*and others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way*" (Matt., Mark). So may we make bare and unclothe ourselves of all things, with which our pride would invest itself, and lay them under His feet; let us throw down in the way before Him all that art or nature would boast; to celebrate the coming of this our Immanuel, our God come to tabernacle with us and among us.

But nothing has been yet said of the loud acclamations, for they appear to have commenced at this point. For now, as they came to the brow of the hill, were they met by that great multitude which St. John speaks of as "coming from Jerusalem with palm-branches to meet Him." "*And as He now drew near,*" says St. Luke, "*to the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of His disciples began to rejoice, and praise God, with a loud voice, for all the mighty works which they had seen*" (Luke).

⁵ Deut. xviii. 16.

“*And now the multitudes*” (Matt.) “*that went before, and they that followed after*” (Matt., Mark), “*cried out*” (Matt., Mark, John), “*saying*” (Matt., Mark), “*Hosanna*” (Matt., Mark, John) “*to the son of David !*” (Matt.) “They that went before,” the Prophets and just men ; “and they that followed after,” the Apostles and Saints, all join together to celebrate His coming, the coming of the Son of David ; they both lift up one and the same according voice, for both alike speak of Him, whether before or after, both acknowledge Him alone, and are received only in Him. It is St. Matthew here that mentions the Son of David, it is He especially that records Him as such¹, “*Blessed is He*” (“*the King*,” Luke) “*that cometh in the name of the Lord*” (Matt., Mark, Luke, John). The Greek perhaps with St. Luke sung “the King that cometh,” and the Hebrew with St. Matthew, “Hosanna,” though neither knew the full import of the words. It was “He that cometh,” “whose goings forth have been from everlasting² ;” it was “He that cometh” not in His own name, but “in the name of the Lord ;” for He said, “I am come in My Father’s name ;” and of Antichrist He added, “if another come in his own name, him will ye receive.” Therefore all the Evangelists join together with one voice, testifying that it was “He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” St. John adds, “*the King of Israel*,” and St. Luke, “*peace in Heaven, and glory in the Highest*.” And St. Mark, “*Blessed is the kingdom that cometh in the name of the Lord, of our father David* ;” and with St. Matthew, “*Hosanna in the Highest*” (Matt., Mark). And, doubtless, in the highest Heavens alone was glory duly given on this day, so that had it not found some feeble echo among mankind, the stones themselves would have given back

¹ Matt. i. 1.

² Micah v. 2.

the sound. It was peace in Heaven ; “for Angels,” says Theophylact, “were praising God for this reconciliation ; for God, by walking visibly in the territory of His enemies, signifies thereby that He hath made concord with us.” It was “glory in the highest,” and “salvation in the highest,” because the highest Heaven and earth were now to be joined together, and things earthly and Heavenly respond to each other in His praise. As when He was born, the Heavenly Hosts sung His natal hymn ; so now that He is going to return to the Heavenly Jerusalem, mortal men respond and take up the strain.

Thus, although all things were made to mark out “the King,” “the King of Israel,” yet with their exclamations did they blend also the recognition of all that the Prophets had spoken ; as He was last night embalmed as “the Anointed of God,” so was He now recognized as the One “coming from the Lord,” as “the Son of David,” and if the Son of David, then the inheritor of the eternal kingdom. For “His seat is like as the sun before Me,” and “His throne as the days of Heaven³.” As at the Crucifixion His enemies, though they knew it not, were using the words of prophecy and Psalms, so were His friends now, though perhaps they knew it not. Indeed, as the expressions they used were from the 118th Psalm, so the whole of that Psalm, whether other parts of it were repeated by them or not, is descriptive of this our Lord’s coming, “Open me the gates of righteousness, that I may go into them, and give thanks unto the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter into it. This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. We have wished you good luck, ye that are of the

³ Ps. lxxxix. 30.

house of the Lord. Bind the sacrifice with cords, yea, even unto the horns of the altar." Thus was He coming as the Victim, though they knew it not. He was celebrated as God also with the psalm of "Hosannah," with the palm trees and boughs as in the Feast of Tabernacles, celebrating His coming to tabernacle with us in the flesh. In the last chapter of Zechariah, which speaks so remarkably of Christ's kingdom, it is at the Feast of Tabernacles that all "the families of the earth are to come up to Jerusalem to worship the King⁴." It is described as the return of the captives, and it is the Feast of Tabernacles, which captives celebrate at their return. As when on their return from captivity, they "found it written in the Law," "that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches;" "therefore" (as it is said in the Maccabees) "they bare branches and fair boughs, and palms also, and sung psalms unto Him that had given them good success in cleansing His place." Yea, even the heathens themselves had caught from sacred antiquity the prophetic token, and had been made to bear the signals of this great victory over sin and death; for their victors ever carried in their hands the *palm branch* of victory. All this now set forth on earth but prefigures that time, of which the Revelation of St. John speaks, when "a great multitude which no man could number of all nations" shall stand "before the throne, with *palms* in their hands; and cry with a loud voice, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

But all these things which we read of as then fulfilled

⁴ Zech. xiv. 17. See also verse 4: "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem."

visibly, and which are hereafter to be fulfilled spiritually in Heaven, may also, even now, by wholesome instruction, be fulfilled in us in some sense, both visibly as well as spiritually. For these things, speaking to us with new lessons, even at this day, may signify the entrance of Jesus Christ into that which He has called His own temple, the heart of man. Into which He would now wish to enter in meekness; for the time will be hereafter, when He will come to us in judgment. Our animal nature, brought to Him by them who have His authority to loose and bind, must submit to Him and take the rein,—His easy yoke and light burden; being clothed upon and strewed with the garments of His Apostles, that the Word of God may ride thereon, and take possession of our souls. “Happy they,” says St. Ambrose, “who into their inmost reins have received such a rider! Happy indeed are they whose mouths the bridle of the Heavenly Word hath restrained⁵.” “Into Jerusalem, the soul,” says Origen, “He enters not alone, nor yet with some few only; for many things must take place in us to go before the Word of God, which protects us, and very many to follow Him.” He indeed can never come alone; for wherever He is, all things must serve Him; all thoughts, all affections within us, must be His, if He comes. All those things with which we have clothed ourselves, for defence against the rough world, or for ornament and sign of wealth and honour, we must lay at His feet; yea, even whatever nature can present to do Him honour we will cast down before Him. We must acknowledge Him as our King, and having no laws but His; we must receive Him as Him that cometh from God, and listen to His words; yea, we must receive Him with adoration, as God Himself, and acknowledge the presence

⁵ In Luc. lib. ix. 9.

by Hosannas of a contrite heart, saying, "Save, I beseech Thee." And when our kindling feelings break forth in Hosannahs to-day, taking care that such feelings in the reaction of an inconstant heart do not crucify Him to-morrow. For He is within us, though we know it not; they that go before,—all our hopes and fears for the future; and they that follow after,—all our experience of the past, in repentance or thanksgiving, acknowledge Him. All lowly thoughts,—the children crying in the temple,—sing His praise; but high thoughts and proud designs,—the Pharisee and the great,—know Him not, and would fain stifle within us whatever would do Him honour. But He is within us as One that weepeth, ever filling our hearts with thoughts of contrition and sorrow. That this His kingdom may come, and be established within us, is our constant prayer. This is "the kingdom and the power and the glory" which we acknowledge to be His. "Even so come, Lord Jesus!" even so come in Thy meekness, and reign within us, and drive out from our hearts all that offends Thee, before Thou comest to us in Judgment!

But we may well ask, how could a sensation so great as this be at this time occasioned? St. John himself proceeds to explain it; it was from that great type of the Resurrection which had occurred among them so lately: the great miracle which our Lord had reserved for the last of all, as so divinely suited to the dispensation which was now to follow. "*The people therefore bore their testimony, who were with Him, when He called Lazarus from the sepulchre, and raised him from the dead. For this cause also the people met Him, because they had heard of His having done this miracle*" (John). Mingled therefore with the crowd were witnesses credible and many, who gave account of this transaction. And blended also with them

were others, whom even the testimony of this miracle but exasperated the more, and in whose ears all praise of the lowly Jesus was painful. It is remarkable how much it is the case on almost every occasion, whether in Galilee or Judea, whatever is said or done by our Blessed Lord, or by the poor who receive Him, that there comes forth a Pharisee in the crowd full of envy and reproof. The sight of great holiness and goodness, especially if pressed and forced thus on the attention, seems to affect some mysterious economy in the human soul; so that when such a case is seen and set before it, if not recovered and restored thereby, which of course would require humiliation, it is rendered worse and more virulent; and its fall is hastened. It has been well likened to a pillar which has fallen obliquely, and which, if not re-established by any weight or force applied to it, goes more on its side. Such was the effect of the sight and praise of Christ on these Pharisees. *"And some of the Pharisees from among the crowd said unto Him, Master, rebuke Thy disciples. And He answered and said unto them, I say unto you, that if these should hold their peace, the very stones would cry out"* (Luke). For surely, if the Lord of Angels in this His humiliation was not to receive even this acknowledgment from the poor, even inanimate nature itself would burst forth in His praise. Even those lifeless stones would re-echo back the voice of prophecy which had sounded from the beginning of the world: even out of those stones He would raise up those true children of Abraham who should speak His glory; the living stones of His temple, which shall never cease, day and night, to sing "the song of Moses and of the Lamb."

Here it may be noticed, as St. Cyril observes, that our Lord approves of those who praise Him as God, and

reproves those who would hinder them. It is indeed one of those numberless instances,—such as are almost inseparable from all that our Lord either said or did,—whereby there ever, secretly as it were, and almost, if one might so express it, unconsciously, break out indications of His hidden Godhead. Such must have been very impressive and awe-inspiring to a watchful disciple, such as St. John or St. Peter; but they of course who would not be convinced by His power and goodness, were but the more offended thereby.

SECTION VII

CHRIST WEeping OVER JERUSALEM

THEY had now arrived at that place from which the Holy City lay distinctly visible before them, as they came to the descent of the Mount of Olives. Here it first appeared, as they descended, with the Temple beautifully rising, over against them, on the sacred hill beyond the ravine below; while the mountains from which they descended appeared to be standing around, and representing the protection of the Almighty Himself around His Holy City. St. Luke, ever watchful to mention every indication of compassionate pity in our Lord, has not failed to record how deeply He was moved at the sight. Great indeed was the contrast; and far more affecting is the circumstance from the effect of that contrast, while all around Him were rejoicing and He was weeping, weeping for them, and for others who had no sense of their own lamentable condition. It is for those

who are not able to feel for themselves, that we feel most : even the joy of others, who are unconscious of their own weakness and misery, tends the more to open the heart to pity them. "All the beatitudes which Jesus spake in the Gospel He confirms by His own example," says Origen, "He said, 'Blessed are the meek,' and proves it by His saying, 'Learn of Me, for I am meek.' He had said, 'Blessed are they that weep,' and He Himself weepeth over His City." And Gregory, "The Holy Redeemer wept over the ruin of that perfidious City, while she herself knew not the ruin that was coming upon her. 'Hadst thou but known,' He said, 'even thou !' Even thou, we may suppose, wouldst have wept who art now exulting, because thou knowest not what is coming upon thee. And it is added 'in thy day ;' for she in her day, when she was giving herself up to carnal delights, had the things which might have been to her peace." Or as St. Cyril says, of the words "if thou hadst but known, even thou," "for they were not worthy to perceive the Divinely inspired Scriptures which speak of the mystery of Christ, for as oft as Moses is read, the veil darkeneth their heart. And because they beheld not the truth, they made themselves unworthy of that salvation which floweth from Christ." But what is very remarkable, although Christ is weeping in the midst of them, yet His disciples, as if they perceived not their Master's tears, are still continuing to rejoice. Strange and wonderful scene—our God in tears, and man rejoicing ! And how often is this the case when good men are lamenting over the sins of those around them, while those persons themselves are unconscious of their own need of tears ? but these tears and sorrows of the good are in silence and secret, and unknown to those who are the objects and cause of those tears. May

His Gracious Spirit protect us, that we also appear not to ourselves or others to be rejoicing with Him, while He is weeping over us ! The very exultation of those around Him was to our Blessed Lord a fresh occasion of sorrow, for He knew their inconstancy, which they knew not ; and their praise, as Quesnel well says, was but an apt emblem of the glory which the world bestows, which is but like a flash of lightning. But what was the immediate subject of our Blessed Lord's tears ? It was the same object which was present to His sorrowful Spirit, and of which He spake also as He was bearing His Cross to Golgotha, and which the same Evangelist has recorded. This also was the subject in that His pathetic lamentation, when He says that "He would have gathered her children together as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings,"—to protect them from the destroying enemy,—but they "would not." It was in all these cases the desolation of Jerusalem¹. And it is to be observed that the Prophet Jeremiah,—who most of all, in his own person as a Prophet,—represented the woes of "the Man of Sorrows," and in whom the Holy Spirit abounds in compassionate lamentations very similar to these of our Lord,—has also the same subject for his tears, viz. the desolations and destruction of Jerusalem in consequence of her sins. That Prophet had in all his lamentations set forth in type this our Lord's coming to Jerusalem in tears. But St. Cyril and others think that our Lord's words themselves here have a reference to the similar expression in Isaiah², "Woe to Ariel, the city where David dwelt ! . . . I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and will raise forts against thee. And thou shalt be brought down, and speak out of the ground."

¹ See Passion, p. 276.

² Ch. xxix. 1. 3, 4.

It is often the case that our Lord's words and parables are formed on the Old Testament.

"And as He came near, when He beheld the City, He wept over it, saying, If thou hadst but known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace ; but now are they hid from thine eyes. For the days will come upon thee, and thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and shall encircle thee, and hem thee in on every side, and lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee ; and shall not leave in thee one stone upon another ; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation" (Luke). Nations, therefore, and individuals have their times of visitation, after which the things that belong unto their peace are hid from them ; their eyes become blinded ; the light within them is darkened. It is at such a time that our Lord comes to them in a fuller manifestation, and they cannot receive Him. And may not this history, which is so closely bound up in prophecy with that of the end of the world, have some reference to the spiritual Jerusalem in this respect, that our Lord will be mourning over her also ? Indeed it is evident that this tender commiseration of our Lord, shown so visibly by His human tears, and which was then expressed in terms that applied to the nearer object,—the destruction of Jerusalem, had also a further and prospective reference to the spiritual Jerusalem. Origen thus takes it, as applying to the ruins of a soul which, after having the mysteries of truth revealed unto it, falls into sin. "I do not deny," says Origen, "that that Jerusalem was destroyed on account of the crimes of its inhabitants ; but I ask if that weeping does not perhaps pertain also to this Jerusalem ? For if after the mysteries of truth, any shall have sinned, he shall be lamented. For no Gentile is wept for, but he

who was of Jerusalem, and hath ceased to be." "It is our Jerusalem," he says, "that is wept for, when after sins its spiritual enemies surround it, and cast a trench about it." St. Chrysostom has a like reflection on it,—as a warning to us, that we take care that the Lord have not to weep over us, for we are that Jerusalem over which He weeps: yea, much more unhappy than that, if, after the word of truth hath been declared unto us, we fall into sin. Gregory as beautifully dwells on the same interpretation. "Our Redeemer through His Elect ceases not to mourn over us, when He considers some who after a good life have fallen into reprobate manners; who, if they would but perceive that damnation which hangeth over them, would join their own tears also with those of the Elect. But the perverse soul, that delighteth in this transitory time, hath its day. In the which are set before it the things that belong unto its peace, while it taketh delight in temporal objects, and refuseth to foresee those future things which may disturb its present joy." He afterwards adds, "But the depraved mind God assiduously visits by precept, sometimes by the scourge, and sometimes by miracle, in order that it may return, being touched with compunction and sorrow; or, overcome by benefits, may blush for the evil it hath done. But because it knoweth not the day of its visitation, in the end of life it is delivered up to its enemies." The same writer dwells also, particularly and at length, on the adaptation of this fearful prophecy to spiritual enemies, when they shall besiege and overthrow a soul, at length given up to their power; drawing out more fully the same application of Origen. Quesnel also does the same. "Our Blessed Saviour," he says, "speaks here only of the temporal punishment which was to be inflicted on the Jews, to the

end that all may understand that this is but a figure and shadow of that which the Divine Justice prepares for sinners in the other life." "If God by such external punishments as these takes vengeance on the Jews for their contempt of Christ's external visitation by His Incarnation, preaching, miracles, and mysteries, what ought not an unfaithful soul to fear which He has visited internally, and made His habitation, palace, and royal city, by His grace and sacraments?" "Lord, let the serious consideration of so great a desolation as this excite in me a salutary dread of losing Thee!"

May God grant that we may feel for ourselves as He feels for us! May we feel for ourselves as His angels, who watch over us, feel for us! For if they rejoice over one sinner that repenteth, doubtless they sympathize in their Master's tears. May we feel for ourselves as the Saints, which are with God, feel for us! For if even in the place of the wicked the Rich man was moved at the thought of that desolation which was coming on his five brethren in the flesh, much more do the spirits of the good feel for us, while we haply are rejoicing in worldly delights.

SECTION VIII

CHRIST ENTERING JERUSALEM

"And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and" went, as we may suppose, to the place which was the object of His coming, *"into the temple."* (Mark.) *"And when He was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitudes said, This is Jesus the*

Prophet, He of Nazareth of Galilee." (Matt.) Their own Prophets long before had both asked and answered the question, or rather that good Spirit had answered it to them, Who never fails to answer those that ask of Him. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save¹." "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? . . . Even he that hath clean hands and a pure heart. . . . Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is the King of Glory? It is the Lord strong and mighty, even the Lord strong in battle²." But the former Prophet had said, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Yet they all confess Him, as the Scriptures had said, that "He shall be called a Nazarene." Friends and foes, Chief Priests in hate, Pilate in mockery, Angels in adoration, disciples in love, Christ Himself in lowliness³, and now the multitudes in simplicity, all proclaim Him "of Nazareth."

"He entered," says St. Mark, "into the temple." "*And in the temple there came unto Him blind and lame men, and he healed them.*" (Matt.) As if in order to show more strongly the fulfilment of the Prophecies: "Fear not; behold, your God will come. . . . He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened . . . then shall the lame man leap as an hart⁴," But all these things only tended the more to harden the Pharisees in unbelief. "*The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye not that ye avail not at*

¹ Isa. lxiii.

³ Acts xxii. 8.

² Ps. xxiv.

⁴ Isa. xxxv. 6

all !" on witnessing the great sensation which the raising of Lazarus had created ; "*behold, the world hath gone after Him.*" (John.) And now, in addition to the fresh miracles which our Lord was performing, another circumstance arrested their attention, for the children were singing His praise. They had perhaps caught the acclamations they had heard, or were actuated by a sort of Divine instinct, and were regardless of the frown of the Pharisee, for their simplicity of heart gave them a courage which many weak believers more advanced in age had not, and inspired them to do what others would not have dared. "*When the Chief Priests and Scribes,*" says St. Matthew, "*saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosannah to the Son of David, they were sore displeased.*" As the proud Michal, the daughter of Saul, when she reproved David because, transported with a holy zeal and delight, he played before the Ark of God when it was brought into the Holy City ; so now was this Israel after the flesh, the daughter of the earthly Sion, displeased at the Son of David. She therefore, like Michal, shall ever hereafter be barren unto the day of her death.

"They were sore displeased," it is written, "*and said unto Him, Hearest thou what these say ? But Jesus saith unto them, Yea, have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise ?*" (Matt.) Thus did our Lord turn the attention of the Pharisees, whom He ever referred to their own Scriptures, to that very beautiful short Psalm which so touchingly throughout spoke of Himself and His Sovereignty. By these words did He describe the very nature of His Kingdom, into which no one shall enter who doth not become as a little child. And well may His sorrowful Spirit have

been gladdened by this most acceptable welcome that He could have received, for this was the cause why He had "rejoiced in spirit," and given thanks to the Father that He had hid these things from those like these Scribes, who were wise in their own eyes, and "had revealed them unto" such as these "babes." What songs therefore of triumph upon earth were more becoming this great entry of the Prince of Peace than those of these children? Little children were His first martyrs; little children did He take up into His arms; little children now sang His praise in His own temple; and such are they who in Heaven sing the "new song before the throne," "and which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." His own Priests are silent, or only break silence to blaspheme His Name; but little children have spoken no evil against Him. Over His own people He weeps, but with these babes He rejoices. He bids the women to lament for themselves, but He encourages the little children to rejoice.

And when He had said these things He left them—"He left them," says St. John afterwards, "and did hide Himself from them:" for as "the servant of the Lord must not strive," neither did his Master, but was "gentle towards all men." Wickedness, when it is not restrained, is only excited by instruction; such persons are indeed best instructed by retiring from them, and best overcome by meekness. "*And He left them,*" adds St. Matthew, "*and departed.*"

His coming now to the Temple was not to teach, but to present Himself before God, if we may so venture to suppose. It was hastening, as a good son to His Father's house. It was the Messenger of the Covenant, the true Melchizedec, the Unchangeable Priest and King, the

Everlasting God, coming to visit His own Temple. Nor was there any thing now in the Temple itself to break in upon this harmony of one of the first of Christian Sundays, for the evening sacrifices being over the buyers and sellers had gone. But, as St. Mark says, "*when He had looked round upon all things,*" for "His eyes are in every place beholding the evil and the good," sanctifying all things in His Father's house by the Light of His countenance; "when He had looked round on all things," says that Evangelist, by whom St. Peter speaks, and who fails not to observe every look and expression which came on the countenance of the Son of Man; but why He looked around, and what that look denoted, and what He saw there when He gazed around; and whether it were a look of satisfaction or of mournful and heart-breaking lamentation, which had so lately bedewed that sacred countenance with tears, is not recorded. "*As now the eventide was come, He went out*" (Mark) "*and departed out of the city*" (Matt.) "*to Bethany*" (Matt., Mark), "*together with the twelve*" (Mark), "*and lodged there.*" (Matt.) Thus again, when the evening of the world has come, will He visit the Christian temple, and look round on all things that are therein. So indeed now is He looking round therein; but He speaks not aloud. But soon, on the morning of the great Resurrection, will He come and drive out from His Father's house all things and persons that offend. But, at this time He comes as Salvation, as the Lamb and Victim; and now He departs in peace to Bethany.

"So great was the poverty of our Lord," says the venerable Bede⁵, "so far was He from flattering any one, that in so great a city He found no one to invite Him, no

⁵ Aurea Catena.

dwelling-place, but dwelt in a little village with Lazarus and his sisters." Ancient writers are ever alluding to the name of this place which our Blessed Lord chose for His abode, ever reminding us of hallowed association and Divine teaching contained in the very word; while they could not note with critical precision the cause and object of His sojourn there. Thus Origen beautifully says, "This is that Bethany⁶, where he that had arisen from the dead, the friend of Jesus, dwelt; and every one that obeyeth the Word of God and hath the Word of obedience seated within him, is the house of obedience, and Bethany, in which Jesus Christ lodgeth and findeth rest."

SECTION IX

THE GREEKS BROUGHT TO CHRIST

THERE is a circumstance which St. John records, of which it is not clear whether it occurred on this or on either of the following days; but the account itself is quite in harmony and keeping with the occurrences of this Day of the Lord; and as it speaks of persons who had not before an opportunity of seeing Christ, it seems more probable that it may have occurred on this the first visit to Jerusalem, than on either of the succeeding days on which He taught publicly. Nor is the place evident, whether it was in the Temple, or on going out of the Temple, or in departing from the City, that they came to our Lord, when He made that affecting appeal to His disciples, and that solemn prayer to the Father which accompanies it. That it should have occurred in the

⁶ Com. in Matt. tom. xvi. 27.

Temple seems not unnatural ; or rather in some outer precincts of the Temple, into which these Greeks might find access. Nothing indeed is said of any of the transactions of our Lord on this His coming to the Temple, excepting some miraculous cures ; but as He designated His Father's house the house of Prayer, we may suppose that religious worship was to Himself more especially the object of His going there. "*And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast. Now these came to Philip, who was of Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, saying, Master, we wish to see Jesus.*" It does not appear why they should come to Philip ; it might have been by accident, or it might have been from something in his character¹, or that as an inhabitant of Bethsaida contiguous to the Gentiles he was more particularly accessible to them. "*Philip cometh and telleth Andrew,*" who on another occasion also² seems connected with him in speaking to our Lord. And perhaps, as St. Andrew himself was the first called of the Apostles, it was suitable that he should bring the first of the Gentile converts to Christ. "*And again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.*" As there were two Apostles sent for the colt which represented the Gentiles, so there are two now who tell Jesus of their coming, the first-fruits of the Gentiles. And when Philip and Andrew are mentioned together on the miracle of the loaves, it may be observed that they are combined in waiting on our Lord in behalf of others ; so it would appear as if, where the privilege was to draw near to Christ in His glory or humiliation, there are three others who have the preference ; but these two in the next degree, which is that of ministering for Christ to others. But it may be noticed that, neither on this or on any other occasion, does our Lord

¹ See Study of Gospels, p. 405.

² John vi. 5—8.

meet those who eagerly come to Him with encouragement; but rather as usual speaks of the Cross and of mortification. *"And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour hath come that the Son of Man may be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, unless a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it beareth much fruit."* Perhaps the figure was, humanly speaking, suggested to our Lord by the circumstance of those Greeks being the "first-fruits;" He Himself on His rising on Easter Day was the offering of the first sheaf "on the morrow after the Sabbath³;" and the coming-in of the Gentiles on the day of Pentecost was the gathering-in of the harvest. But the grain of wheat is often the emblem of Himself; as in the parable the seed is the Word; the grain of wheat, which is separated from the chaff, is the good Christian, who is born of Christ; and that which is now the grain of wheat becomes "the bread of life," the "true Bread which cometh down from Heaven." The wheat is the Body of Christ, of which we partake, and by virtue of which communication to us our bodies also partake of Resurrection. And now our Blessed Lord, recognizing in these Greeks a token of the Gentiles coming in, sees in it also the sign of His own approaching death. For the calling-in of the Gentiles could not be till the Jews had rejected Him, and crucified Him. According to His instruction to His disciples, that they should not preach to the Gentiles till Israel had rejected them,—according to the rule of His own conduct,—and indeed according to this the economy of the Gospel throughout; whereby the riches of the Gentiles arise from the fall of the Jews. This connects the subject immediately with His own death. For thus ever closely united is His Glory with His passion,

³ Lev. xxiii. 11.

Christ risen with Christ crucified ; the marks of His sufferings are the indications of His risen Body. He sees the Gentile and the Jew on the point of being combined together in Himself the Corner-stone ; but that Corner-stone must first of all be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. "He Himself," says St. Augustin, "was the grain to be mortified and to be multiplied ; to be mortified by the unbelief of the Jews, to be multiplied by the belief of all nations. And now, therefore, He exhorteth to follow the steps of His Passion ⁴."

Thus did our Lord at this time seize every opportunity to speak to them of His approaching Passion ; and pointed out that nature itself was filled with emblems of its virtue and energy, of which this coming of the Gentiles was as it were already the first-fruits. Nor was it inanimate nature only that abounded with these analogies and similitudes of life propagated by death, but more particularly should His own redeemed exemplify this living virtue of the Cross, and so far as they were crucified with Him should they partake of the "power of His Resurrection." For His death was itself the great foundation of all Christian doctrine. And now, as He felt the coming on of that hour, in His own words of solemn asseveration, "verily, verily," did He announce unto them this law, of death and suffering being henceforth from their connexion with Him the door to life. "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that loveth his life shall lose it ; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal*" (John). Even Heathen philosophers had seen that a true love of life, or a love of true life, would sacrifice all things that appertained to the body, in order to cherish the higher and better life of the soul ⁵ ; but they knew not that Cross from which this

⁴ In Joan. Tr. li.

⁵ Arist. Ethics, ix. 4.

virtue flowed to mortification, nor that Example which made it sweet and sanctified it. This great principle may indeed be seen in the smallest matters, for experience will teach any one that self-indulgence deadens the sense of things spiritual, and that self-denial increases it: and therefore he that loves things Heavenly must hate things earthly, which deaden and impair the sense of them, and make cold the love of them. "Life is sweet to those who cling to its pleasures," says St. Chrysostom, "but when Heavenly things appear it is as nothing. Personal beauty may please, but when greater beauty is seen it is despised." "He loveth his soul," he adds, "in this world who pursueth the desires of the same: he hateth it who yieldeth not to it when it desireth things hurtful. But he hath not said who yieldeth not to it, but who hateth it. For in like manner as we cannot bear to hear the voice of those who are hated, and there is no delight in beholding them; so ought we earnestly to turn away from our soul, when it is enjoying things that are not pleasing to God⁶." And all this will flow from our following the example of our Blessed Lord, and from the virtue that goeth forth from Him to strengthen us in doing so. "*If any one would serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be; and if any one serve Me, him will My Father honour.*" All true honour cometh from God only, and though "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son," yet of the final reward it is said, "it shall be given unto those for whom it is prepared of My Father;" and they are addressed as, "Come, ye blessed of My Father." God the Father will honour them, for they will be one with His beloved Son; in Him and for His sake

⁶ Hom. in Joan. lxvii.

He will behold them. Infinite therefore will be the honour
He will bestow on them.

It appears to have been on the same occasion, when led to the mention and contemplation of His sufferings by this incident, that our Lord makes that Holy address to the Father, ever present with Him, and which He has been graciously pleased that His beloved disciple should record; who perhaps at the time heard in faith, and either then or afterwards understood the words; for the ever Divine and Heavenly course of his thoughts seem always to notice and embrace those sublime and transcendental truths, which intimate the ineffable union of Christ with the Father, and His own Godhead. *"Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour? But for this purpose came I unto this hour."* Thus did our Lord draw us near to Himself by showing how deeply He partook of our fears and sorrows; as if to draw us on with and in Himself to something better. Of which St. Austin beautifully says, "Thou commandest my soul to follow, but I see Thy soul is troubled; what foundation shall I seek if the Rock gives way? I acknowledge, O Lord, Thy pitifulness, Who art troubled at the will of Thine own Love; and thus in Thine own Body consolest many who are troubled by the necessity of their own infirmity, lest they perish with despair." "In Himself therefore He, Who is our Head, took the affections of His members, and therefore on raising Lazarus it is not said that He was troubled, but that 'He troubled Himself'." And this our Lord's perfect humanity, as thus evinced, St. Chrysostom also describes: "As He approached," says he, "to the Cross He sheweth that which is human, and a nature not willing to die, but adhering to present life,

⁷ In Joan. Tra. lii.

showing that He was not beyond the reach of human passions. For as it is not a sin to feel hunger, neither is it to desire present life⁸." St. Cyril of Alexandria, and Athanasius also, consider these expressions of our Lord's as setting forth the reality of His human nature : and, indeed, how else could He call on us to suffer with Him unless He truly suffered as we do ? for our worst sufferings are those of natural fear and sorrow. For here, as in the agony in the garden, we have the voice of human nature shrinking from pain and death, and in the midst of natural apprehension the name of the Father glorified, and perfect resignation to His will expressed ; showing us thereby that patience is evinced, not by the absence of natural feelings, but in not yielding to them.

"Father, glorify Thy name." The thought that His sufferings were to God's glory was sufficient, and thus did He express His most perfect acquiescence. And the Father, in wonderful union with the Son, expresses His perfect acceptance. As He had been already glorified in His lowly birth, and unerring obedience, so would He now be glorified in His death. *"There came then a Voice out of Heaven, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."* For if our Lord spoke of St. Peter's death as the death "by which he should glorify God⁹," much more would His own death be glorifying God. But St. Austin suggests, that as He had glorified His name before the worlds were made, so would He glorify it again when Christ should rise from the dead. Perhaps we may reverently suppose our Lord's words applied to His own resignation to death, and those of the Father to that resurrection whereby He would glorify the Son. *"The people, therefore, who stood and heard it, said that*

⁸ Hom. in Joan. lxvii.

⁹ John xxi. 19.

it thundered, others said, an Angel spake unto Him." These, perhaps, heard more distinctly something like the sound of words. Thus indeed is it always, that the Divine Voice is heard more distinctly by different persons, according to the state of their own heart, which gives them "ears to hear : " by some it is heard merely as what they suppose the accidents of nature, as thunder ; by some as supernatural voices ; by some, as by the disciple of love, the Divine message is heard and understood. "*Jesus answered and said unto them, This voice came not for My sake, but for yours.*" As He had said at the grave of Lazarus, that for the sake of others He spake aloud unto the Father, so now, also, for their sakes did the Father speak aloud unto Him.

The Voice from Heaven seems to mark this day with a great and peculiar honour, and seems to give it a place in our thoughts together with the other two occasions when the Voice was heard, viz., at our Lord's Baptism, and at His Transfiguration. And this Divine Voice being heard for the third time seems to imply some high and Divine confirmation. Three times did the Lord call Samuel. Three times was the sheet let down from Heaven to St. Peter. If we might venture to say so, it seems to mark this occasion as in some sense equivalent to and co-ordinate with the other two—our Lord's Baptism, and His Transfiguration ; the former of which seems to bear a reference to the regeneration of our souls, and the latter to that of our bodies. It may be because this His triumphal entry was the taking upon Himself His eternal kingdom ; or this appearing in the Temple was the oblation of Himself to God as the Victim set apart for the sins of the whole world, and thus solemnly accepted by this Voice. Moreover, on the other two occasions the

Trinity was mysteriously represented as present. The Father is on each occasion heard speaking. The Holy Spirit is on the first occasion seen in the bodily shape like a Dove; on the second, in the Cloud; and now, perhaps, also in some mysterious manner was the Holy Spirit present, for it was "through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God¹." It may be that a commission from on High is usually marked by an external and sensible sign. Thus our Lord "breathed" on the Apostles, and so conferred the gift of the Holy Ghost for their ministry, saying to them, "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." Thus also by external and visible manifestations He afterwards commissioned St. Paul. So it may be that His own commission from the Father is marked by a sensible expression. Now this our Lord's commission was of a threefold character, in that He is set forth as Priest, as Prophet, and as King; in each of which offices He is the "Anointed" of God, which appears to indicate external sanctification and designation. It has been well observed, that the three occasions when this Divine Voice was heard, have some correspondence with the designation of those three offices: the first Voice, which was heard at our Lord's baptism, was His sanctification as Priest, in which office He then came forward to the world at the Priestly age; the second, as that Prophet to whom Moses and Elias in that manifestation, as seen in the Mount, gave way; and the third Voice was His Heavenly sanction as King. The words spoken, indeed, refer not distinctly to these designations; but the occasions indicate and correspond with them².

Our Lord, alluding to this Voice, thus vouchsafed to

¹ Heb. ix. 14.

² See Plain Sermons, vol. i. S. xxix.

them from Heaven, proceeded, "*Now is the judgment of this world.*" The manifestation of Christ crucified, which was the consolation and recovery of the good, was the test and condemnation of the wicked. Now was "the judgment," the discerning of spirits, the trial of character, the separation of the good from the bad, the winnowing of the wheat. Not that this coming of Christ was to judge, for He says, "I came not to judge³," but His word had this effect, "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him;" and therefore, also, He says, "for judgment I am come into this world⁴." "*Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying by what death He was about to die. The people answered Him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever; and how sayest Thou that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is the Son of Man?*" It does not appear that they understood by the expression being "lifted up," that our Lord spoke of His crucifixion; but they seem to have perceived from that, or some other expression, or something in our Lord's manner, that He spoke of death. It appears from this and many other passages, that they had derived from prophecy a correct idea of the Messiah, that He was to "abide for ever;" but how and in what sense faith alone could understand. But this mysterious term of "the Son of Man," which He so often used, they could not quite comprehend, although they supposed that somehow it must be of the Messiah that He spoke. And in the very expression there was a difficulty; for if the Son of Man was to die, how was He to exert in so doing a living power, and to draw all men unto Him, as the

³ John xii. 47.

⁴ John ix. 39.

Messiah who "abideth for ever"? Who is this Son of Man who is to die? Our Lord does not appear to have replied to this question, because it was one the understanding of which depended on the state of their hearts; it was one which God alone could reveal, and would make known to those who walked according to the light that was given them; for to the eyes of faith it would be the opposite to what outwardly appeared. In human eyes, "this world" was to "judge" Christ, the "prince of this world" was to prevail, and Christ was to be "cast out." But in fact it was the very reverse to all this appearance; it was the exaltation of Christ, the "judgment of this world," and "the prince of this world" to be "cast out." Our Lord speaks of His cross, in His being lifted up and drawing all men unto Him, almost as if it was His judgment-seat. So intimately are His cross and His tribunal connected together, that they seem as it were one and the same, are spoken of under the same expression, and as if the time intervening was as nothing; He is spoken of as thereby saving or condemning mankind, setting them on the right hand or on the left. So much was the Cross the trial of men's spirits⁵. Moreover, the mention of our Lord's greatness is almost invariably connected with His humiliation, and the mention of His humiliation with something that intimates His greatness: at the Transfiguration the discourse is "of His decease at Jerusalem;" at His condemnation He speaks of His coming in glory; and the marks of His humiliation, the Cross or "the sign of the Son of Man" will accompany His second coming to Judgment. So now, in speaking of His cross, He blends with it the mention of circumstances that intimate His Godhead. For this His speaking of

⁵ See *Passion*, pp. 323—326.

drawing men unto Him implies His Divine union with the Father, for He had before said, "no man can come to Me except the Father which hath sent Me draw him;" and this very expression of "drawing" signifies, as St. Chrysostom observes, the exertion of power, and the forcible detention of spiritual powers of evil. It is this union of His Divine and human nature which gives rise to the difficulty which these Jews cannot explain. How is it that the Messiah dies and yet abideth for ever? It is remarkable that this very term the Son of Man implies this secret of His Godhead, while it expresses His humility, for it speaks of Him as man in some peculiar and distinctive sense. It may be noticed that our Lord here does not use this expression, the Son of Man, but these Jews seem to allude to it as that designation of Himself which was familiar to our Lord. This great and awful truth of His own Divinity He explained not to them, lest it should be to their condemnation, if unprepared to receive it; He turned aside the subject from their question, and spoke not to their words, but, as usual, to the state of their hearts, in a manner most earnest and affecting, taking, as it were, to Himself the term the Son of Man. "*Jesus, therefore, said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you; walk while ye have the light, lest darkness overtake you. And he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.*" If they would live according to those holy precepts that were given them, then would God protect them and lead them to truth; but if they did not, a spiritual darkness would overtake them; regardless of mercy and justice they would go on to do what they little thought of, to put to death One Who was no less than the Son of God, God equal to the Father;—taking

part with the prince of darkness. Perhaps His words allude to something more terrible even than this, that blindness of heart which would not only put to death the Son of Man, but then reject the Spirit also, sinning against the Holy Ghost, and involving themselves in that darkness which has from that day to this overtaken them as a nation, and is the type of a worse darkness.

But of some among them He hoped better things, that by living according to the light given them, they would be able to believe in Him, Who was the true Light, and to become His children, purifying themselves even as He is pure, so that they might have eyes to discern God. "*While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may become children of light.*" Whether the sun was now setting, to furnish the figure and add force to the words, does not appear; but certainly St. John seems particularly apt to bring forward those expressions of our Lord which indicate that all nature is mystical and shadowy, and that things Divine only as seen in Christ, are substantially real and true. For the sun about to set, and soon again to rise, was the most significative emblem which our Lord has given the world of Himself, and daily set before us to remind us of His death and rising. And if it were, as we suppose, a Sunday, the expression of light might have a further reference to that day, on which the light of creation and the light of redemption also broke forth. But more than any such external correspondence could have done, did our Lord's own conduct on this occasion add a great and awful solemnity to His words. It was, perhaps, on His part in order not to force upon them that light which condemned but reformed them not; as if, once more, in gracious pity, not allowing Himself to be more fully manifested before

them. "*These things spake Jesus and departed, and hid Himself from them*" (John).

As it is not evident at what time these words were spoken, still less so can we explain how and for what time He concealed Himself from them; whether it was by suddenly retiring when they wished to find Him, and departing to Bethany, on this evening; or whether it was on some other occasion during these days that He concealed Himself from their further view. Or perhaps they may apply to the time of His finally leaving the Temple on Tuesday evening, and to account for the silence of Scripture concerning all that our Lord did on Wednesday and Thursday, in this His retirement to Bethany for those days. All that we know is, that a manifestation of God is replete with danger and judgment, and that in mercy He hides Himself from men. "In concealing Himself," says Augustin, "He consulted our weakness, but derogated not from His own Divinity."

SECTION X

UNBELIEF OF THE JEWS

THE beloved disciple, while he himself observed more and more the rays of Godhead which encompassed our Lord's words and actions, now speaks in solemn words of this remarkable unbelief with which He was received. He proceeds to show, that strange as this may appear to the natural man,—that our Lord should be manifested and not acknowledged, and be struggling as it were in vain with the Jews;—yet all this was fore-ordained in the

counsels of God, and this very blindness was His own judicial infliction. So that while we justly condemn the unbelieving Jew, yet we cannot but see and adore the inscrutable Hand of God: for in apparent weakness He is nevertheless carrying on the unfathomable designs of His Almighty will. He works miracles before them as before Pharaoh, but these only harden them the more. He admonishes and warns, but this hardens the more. He manifests Himself by His words, but this hardens the more. Thus God Himself hardens their heart. Israel is now in the place of Egypt. *“But although He had done so many miracles before them they believed not on Him, that the saying of Esaias the Prophet might be fulfilled which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?”* Thus, in that remarkable description of our Lord’s sufferings in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, did the Prophet commence the account by saying, that it would consist in God being revealed but not known, in “the Arm of the Lord,” that is, in that mighty Power of God, which is Christ, being manifested but not acknowledged. The very expressions are as a comment on our Lord’s own words before referred to, that darkness would overtake them, and they would not know whither they went. And indeed the reason why they could neither see nor understand Christ disclosed before them, was because the hand of God was in it, blinding or enlightening according to the conduct of men; for as none can come to Christ except the Father draw him, nor know Him unless He reveal Him; so it is He that brings over men’s hearts an Egyptian darkness and the hardness of Pharaoh’s heart, when they act not up to the light they have. It is He that sends on men “a strong delusion,” “because they

have pleasure in unrighteousness." St. Chrysostom, although he says that the term "that it might be fulfilled," rather expresses the event than the cause; yet he says that the expression "He hath blinded" and "He hath hardened" in holy Scripture is to alarm the hearers. In fact, as desertion is of God, as evil spirits and their acts are entirely under God's control, it expresses His awful Presence in Judgment as well as in mercy; teaching us to put ourselves entirely in His hands, for good or for evil, as considering that, as natural and temporal evil, so our spiritual state also is altogether in His Almighty power. "*On this account they could not believe, because that Esaias saith in another place, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; lest they should see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*" The Evangelist tells us that it was of Christ and of His Kingdom that the passage speaks in that remarkable account where these words occur. The Lord is there described as sitting on His throne, and in His temple, with His Angels, when the Prophet felt his uncleanness, but by a coal from the altar is made fit for God's service, and hears the command going forth to blind the Jews, so that they could not behold till their long desolation came upon them. "*These things said Esaias, when he saw His Glory, and spake of Him*" (John). The passage seems clearly descriptive of Christ, to speak of Him and of His Glory, and so the Fathers consider it, with the exception of St. Chrysostom, who considers the words as spoken of the Father. In the Hebrew the command goes forth in the imperative, "make their heart gross;" but in the Septuagint, it is "their heart hath been made gross;" St. John seems to combine the two. Perhaps this very alteration in the Septuagint

was with a Divine intent and purpose, as more agreeable to the notions of Gentile philosophy ; but the mysteries of God being more made known to the Hebrews, they are told it is God that hardens : for in the Old Testament God's immediate Hand and Presence is pointed out in all effects which were supposed natural.

But yet this unbelief, great and extraordinary as it was, was not so thorough and entire as might appear on the surface, which St. John (being known unto the High Priest, and perhaps on that account to many of the rulers also) more than once alludes to ; as in the two incidents he gives of Nicodemus, first of all coming to Jesus by night, and afterwards defending His cause in the Sanhedrim. But this belief was of course comparatively weak and faint, and perhaps not more than such as discerned in Christ a very holy Man and a Prophet, not that living confidence which saw God manifested in Him ; for belief in Christ as God "overcometh the world," and would have been regardless of the power of men. But this consideration will assist much towards understanding our Lord's appeals to the Pharisees and from the Scriptures, for they seem to imply that there were some among them upon whom such appeals would not be lost. "*Yet notwithstanding, even of the rulers, many believed on Him, but on account of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the Synagogue.*" As the Pharisees had declared¹ that whoever believed in Him should be excommunicated, and had already passed that sentence on the blind man who believed in his Deliverer².

This weakness of faith was of course on this, as on all occasions, attributable to some latent moral defect, which

¹ John ix. 22.

² John ix. 34.

the Evangelist proceeds to lay open. "*For they loved the praise of men, more than the praise of God.*" The very point which our Lord had so often spoken of to them,—that belief in Him depended on humility of heart, and that ambition or covetousness did in all their various degrees form an insuperable barrier against the power of believing in Him. The whole subject, as intimating this mysterious connexion between faith and practice, is one in the highest degree curious and interesting, deeply founded in the moral nature of man, and so intimately connected with all the Revelations of God to mankind, but more especially and above all things with the mysterious economy of God in the manifestation of His Son, as the means of proving, drawing out, ascertaining, and forming the various dispositions and lives of men at present, and affording the laws and rules by which the Judgment will be regulated hereafter. For it appears that the whole state of men's dispositions, and therefore, of course, their daily lives, as connected with those dispositions, is in some manner proved in the sight of God, by their believing in Christ or not. This, the very foundation stone of all Christian morals, was declared by Christ Himself in very memorable words, which the Evangelist records in connexion with this subject; but it is not apparent whether it was spoken on this occasion, i. e. on the evening of Palm Sunday, or on the following day after driving the buyers from the Temple, as others place it; or after the completion in the Temple of all His discourses during this week, as others suppose; it appears certainly to have been with a marked reference to the timidity of those who were afraid to confess Him. "*But Jesus cried out and said,*" as if with some great emphasis, and in the hearing of them all, as on a former occasion in the

Temple³, "*He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me. And he that beholdeth Me, beholdeth Him that sent Me. I have come a light into the world, that every one who believeth on Me may not continue in darkness. And if any one hear My words, and believe not, I judge him not. For I came not to judge the world, but that I might save the world. He that rejecteth Me and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him. The word that I have spoken, that shall judge him on the last day: for I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father who hath sent Me hath given Me commandment, what I shall say and what I shall speak: and I know that His commandment is life everlasting. The things that I speak, therefore, as the Father hath said unto Me, so I speak*" (John).

Thus does our Lord, although God equal to the Father, although "even as the Father raiseth whom He will and quickeneth, so the Son quickeneth whom He will;"—yet does He in ineffable humility speak to us rather as the Son of Man, and as one commissioned by God the Father, teaching us ever to look to what in His church is in Divine order, commissioned and ordained by Him, and not to that which is of man, being Himself "the Apostle," the one sent, to the Hebrews. Thus does He speak, as holy Fathers observe, in condescension to the weakness of His hearers, more attentive to what might profit them than to His own dignity. Moreover, the words, as coming from God, are founded on eternal truth, of power and weight ineffable, and therefore, as we are told, more enduring than the Heavens and the earth, and which will alone stand at the last Day; words that serve for the discerning of spirits now, and for their condemnation at the

³ John vii. 28.

last ; words piercing the soul asunder and dividing the reins, so as to enter into and to try the inmost heart of mankind ; words containing within them immutable verities and hidden virtues, which Angels desire to look into. And the sum of our Lord's teaching is this, that to keep the commandments of God is everlasting life : for the word which He hath spoken shall judge us at the last Day.

Such were the events of this day, this day of days, when our Lord took upon Him His sovereignty, and established His kingdom, and entered into His own city as the King of sorrows, and into His own temple as the Lamb of God, as the promised Messiah, as God hid in the flesh and not known. Well may we, with the beloved Evangelist, pause in the contemplation of this mysterious economy of God.

SECTION XI

THE CURSING OF THE FIG-TREE

It is evident that our Lord was continuing at Bethany during this week, and coming in the day-time to Jerusalem. That city may have been too full at this time to procure any room there ; or it may have been our Lord's custom to stay always at the house of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary ; perhaps it was the only house open to Him who "had not where to lay His head." Or it might be that He spent the night in prayer at the Mount of Olives, and in the garden at Gethsemane, for it is mentioned as His known custom to do so ; so much so, that Judas was

sure of the place where He would be found ; and it may be, as we read on one of these days, that He returned here from Jerusalem as wishing to hide Himself from them¹. It was now early, and if the Palm Sunday is rightly named, must have been on the Monday morning. "*And on the following day,*" says St. Mark, "*when it was early*" (Matt.), "*after they had gone forth from Bethany*" (Mark), "*as He was returning to the city*" (Matt.), descending with the company of the disciples along the sides of the Mount of Olives, "*He was hungry*" (Matt., Mark). As our Lord spent His nights it appears in prayer, it was, perhaps, in fasting also, for it was His meat to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work. He hungered to-day as He wept yesterday, showing the tenderness of His body and soul ; how prepared He was to suffer most keenly in both. Yet His tears yesterday, and His hunger to-day, are for the sake of others. He is wrapt about with suffering humanity and its sorrows ; but it is for our sakes ; and as the leaf which, when crushed and bruised, sends forth its fragrance, so from the pressure of His suffering humanity emanates Divine, all-healing charity, and already gives the preludes of His passion. It is, as it were, from Him that the very name of "humanity" implies sympathetic tenderness. "*And when He saw a (single*" Matt.) "*fig-tree*" (Matt., Mark) "*by the way-side*" (Matt.), "*from afar off, having leaves*" (Mark), "*He came*" (Matt., Mark) "*up to it*" (Matt.), "*if haply He might find any thing thereon ; and when He came up to it*" (Mark) "*He found nothing*" (Matt., Mark) "*on it*" (Matt.) "*excepting leaves*" (Matt., Mark) "*only*" (Matt.), "*for the time of figs was not yet*" (Mark).

¹ See Passion, p. 39.

It was not that the tree was of a barren kind, nor was it unreasonable to have expected figs on it, but there were none as yet appearing on this tree, notwithstanding its show of leaves. For, however the circumstance may be explained, there was, one must suppose, a perfect propriety in our Lord's action; He would not have gone to a tree from afar unless there might have been a reasonable expectation of finding fruit, nor would He, in such a case, have cursed the tree; that is to say, if the thing had been improbable from the time of year, or the barren nature of the tree; according to that perfect propriety which there is in our Lord's conduct as man. Yet, perhaps, one ought not to be too positive in thus considering it; for Origen, St. Hilary, St. Jerome, and St. Augustin², seem to think the action merely figurative and mystical, and especially St. Chrysostom. He explains it otherwise, and says that our Lord's going up to see "if haply He might find" fruit, only expresses the supposition of the disciples, who thought that this was our Lord's reason for going up to it, and that for this reason the fig-tree was cursed,—because He found none. But that in fact its not being the season of figs indicated that our Lord was not hungry, and indeed that He could not have been hungry, at that early hour, but that He thus wished to teach the disciples that He came unto the tree. For His going when it was not the season of figs would the more have attracted attention. Thus St. Chrysostom considers the circumstance. Quesnel, in like manner says "Christ punishes a tree which did not deserve it, to make us conclude that He would have us understand somewhat else thereby." "Christ does neither through ignorance seek for fruit where there is none, nor through injustice desire to find it where there

² Lib. ii. Evang. Quæst. 51.

can be none. But He does all this out of wisdom and goodness, on purpose to raise in us, by this figure, a just apprehension of that day, when He will come to examine our lives, and when there will be no more any time for the performance of good works." St. Chrysostom says likewise further³: "when any thing of this kind is done on places, or trees, or on brute animals, do not curiously inquire and say, How is the tree justly withered, if it is not the season of fruits? For such a question is most trifling. But look to the miracle and marvel, and glorify the Worker of wonders." Yet, notwithstanding this statement, St. Chrysostom himself would in general sanction us in supposing that the closest accuracy and propriety of circumstances is maintained in the literal and lower sense, at the same time that there exist the highest spiritual meanings. For we hold neither the letter nor the spirit to the exclusion of the other, nor in any way to the disparagement of it. This it is which brings the highest Divine teaching home to common life; we consider the minutest events in life not only in themselves natural and accountable, but full of deep and spiritual meaning. Notwithstanding authorities therefore so great, I still think, in the words of Scripture, that Christ "was hungry," and that there was reason, humanly speaking, to suppose that fruit would be found thereon. At the same time it must be allowed that it is not necessary that it should be an act of strict propriety and justice with respect to the inanimate object selected for the symbol; for in the case of the herd of swine it was not an act of retribution towards them; for neither with inanimate nor irrational objects does God deal in His providence as if they were moral agents.

³ Hom. in Matt. lxxii.

"And Jesus answered" (Mark) "and said unto it, Never hereafter from thee" (Matt., Mark) "let any one eat fruit for ever" (Mark), "let there be fruit for ever" (Matt.); which words our Lord spake not unto the disciples, but was heard in solemn accents speaking unto the tree. It is added, *"and His disciples heard it" (Mark).* St. Matthew, as his custom was to speak rather in the order of subjects than of time, proceeds to mention that withering of the tree; but we are not led to suppose that the effect of our Lord's words was visible at the time, but that it was so found on the next morning.

We may well suppose that the thoughts which must have filled our Lord's mind on this morning, while proceeding to Jerusalem and the Temple, must have been such as nothing could explain to His disciples, no human language could give utterance to. He spake therefore to His disciples then,—as He does to us all now, and at all times,—not so much by word of mouth, written or spoken, as by the daily occurrences and the order of nature, and by natural objects. For even now many are the lessons beyond all power of language which He would teach us; and does so by events that occur about our path and the silent language of Nature, blooming and withering as He wills. For it is with reference to this Divine instruction they impart, that it is said of the visible creation, "there is neither speech nor language, but their voices are heard among them." In the same manner then also did He make Nature herself to speak to His disciples; but it was as it were in a manner beyond nature, the more particularly to fix their regard. For deeds with Christ are parables, and parables are often deeds, or but the account of His deeds.

He was come from Bethany, the house of obedience:

or as Origen says, it was "the Church, that house of obedience in which He had now begun to find rest, for in Jerusalem He found not where to lay His head; and He came again to that City." Or rather may we suppose it was from those blessed Mansions above that He was come; for where else is there true obedience, but among those blessed societies in that His Father's House in Heaven, which He had left? And "He hungered," as it is emphatically stated; and for what else did He hunger but for the fruits of righteousness among His people? For it was but yesterday that He shed tears from the exceeding bitterness of that hunger, on account of which His soul fainted and was exceeding sorrowful. He had done all for it that could be done, and then He had watered it with His tears. "I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah: I will water thee with My tears: for the shouting for thy summer fruits and thy harvest is fallen⁴." And when "He saw a fig-tree from afar off," for it was indeed from afar off in Heaven that He had beheld it, and came. It was "one single" tree, says St. Matthew, it was one only, His own that He had singled out,—it was that very Tree of which He had before spoken, saying that for three years He would intercede for it, and dig about and dress it; and it had been promised Him that, if at last fruit should be found thereon, it would be well. It is as if He spake to it in the words of His own parable, "Behold these three years I come seeking fruit of thee, and find none⁵." Nay, it was that very Tree of which in the beginning of those three years "the voice in the wilderness," His own Forerunner, had spoken, saying that the axe was already at the root, and that if it did not bear fruit it should

⁴ Isa. xvi. 9.

⁵ Luke xiii. 7.

fall. He saw from afar off that it had leaves, and made a goodly show, and that indeed above all the trees; for what nation upon the earth had such an external appearance of sacred worship? where could be found such rites and ordinances, and those so scrupulously observed,—where such pretences to holiness, as among the Jews at this time? They were the very same leaves with which our guilty first parents endeavoured to hide their shame; serving only as a cloak for their wickedness, and to conceal their want of innocence from the eyes of God, when from Heaven He came unto them in the evening of the day; as He now comes to these Jews, when their day of trial was fast verging to its close.

It was “the appearance of life,” says Origen, “without fruit, the profession of faith only with no fruit thereon.” There were leaves only, “Pharisaical traditions,” says St. Hilary; “the justification of the law,” says Augustin, “without the fruits of truth.”

It was “by the way,” on the same way that the good Samaritan was travelling unto the Heavenly City, it was “by the way” of Righteousness, the way of obedience, for it was in fulfilling the Law that He came unto Jerusalem, as by duty bound, unto the Feast of the Passover. He came, “if haply He might find fruit thereon,” not indeed as if expecting much, but as the faithful Abraham interceding for Sodom, “peradventure ten shall be found there.” When He came unto it He found nothing but leaves only and empty semblances of religion; for “it was not yet the time of fruit” with them. Yet these strange and unexplained words may leave us a hope that even with them also the season of fruits may yet come. But not on that withered and accursed stock indeed; unless it be in the time of Anti-

christ, that the evil stock shall again put itself forth, when "the fig-tree shall shoot forth," and we shall know of our ownselves that the Eternal "Summer is nigh." St. Ambrose thus takes the fig-tree for the synagogue, in the place where our Lord speaks of it as putting forth leaves before His second coming⁶. St. Hilary explains at length this fig-tree as the "faithless Synagogue" of the Jews, and speaks of it as "setting forth the image of a future event, when He shall have come in His heavenly kingdom, the sentence of eternal condemnation shall come upon the barrenness of Jewish infidelity." "That fig-tree," says another Latin writer, "is the Synagogue from Cain and the rest, from all of whom blood shall be required from that of Abel to that of Zacharias." It is therefore that "fig-tree" which shall be "shaken by a mighty wind," and "cast her untimely figs," like stars falling from Heaven, at the next coming of the Son of Man⁷.

But there is a fig-tree whose "leaf shall not wither," that fig-tree which is ever coupled with the vine in Prophecy; that fig-tree of whose fruit the Prophet spake that they were "good figs, very good⁸," found in the remnant of captive Israel which was left. That fig-tree under whose shadow the true Nathanael, that "Israelite indeed," shall in watching and prayer await Christ's coming. That fig-tree, it may be, which shall put forth leaves to welcome Christ at His next appearing, and not leaves only but fruit also, when He shall say to the Bride, "The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape. . . Arise, my fair one, and come away⁹." Then shall "the day break and the shadows flee away." The fig-tree indeed on this mount

⁶ See pp. 306, 304.

⁸ Jer. xxiv. 3.

⁷ Rev. vi. 13.

⁹ Cant. ii. 13.

by the earthly Jerusalem is accursed and shall die; but there is a "Branch" springeth forth "as a root out of a dry ground;"—a "Branch" which shall be grafted on the true and living olive-tree on their own Mount of Olives, when the barren tree shall be found there no more. Then may have come the season of fruits with them also, and the Son of Man shall not come in vain. But on that ungracious fig-tree "no man shall ever hereafter find fruit again for ever," "no fruit shall hereafter be thereon for ever." For no good shall come of that evil nation; in their prophets shall there be no truth, in their Priests no holiness, in their sacrifices no value: and when Christ shall again return, as He did at the end of forty years, it shall be found withered and dead: "their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust¹," as "dust before the wind," and they themselves as withered leaves, "scattered with a whirlwind among the nations²." His disciples, the Christians, called unto Him and called by His name, read and hear in His Gospel His repeated declarations respecting that unrighteous nation, observe their fulfilment on the morrow;—and have their own faith strengthened thereby.

But, according to the analogy of Holy Scripture, whatever is said of the Church is said in some sense of each member of it; and whatever is said of the false Israel is said also of the false Christian; with so far greater force as things eternal are greater than things temporal. For Israel in Egypt is the Christian in the world: Israel in the wilderness is the Christian for forty years on trial in this life: Israel in Canaan is the Christian in this His land of promise: Israel witnessing Christ in the flesh is the Christian witnessing Christ in His

¹ Isa. v. 24.

² Zech. vii. 14.

word and Sacraments. This emblem seen in Israel is likewise the type and shadow of God's dealing with the Christian. For Scripture is not of "private interpretation," but is "written for our learning;" and what is said of Israel is said of us. And very babes shall understand this;—for every Christian does at once recognize the voice of the Baptist, as addressed to himself individually, when he says of Israel, "the axe is laid to the root of the tree," and "every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down." Every Christian recognizes it at once as spoken to himself individually, when he reads the parable of Christ dressing the tree for three years, and interceding with the Father; though it spoke first of all His dealings with Israel. In like manner, when we perceive in this miracle the spiritual barrenness of Israel and the heavy judgment that ensued, we cannot fail to recognize also the type and warning of Christ coming to us in the day of visitation.

Thus Origen interprets it spiritually, as speaking to ourselves in our state of probation. "Jesus is hungry," he says, "whenever He wishes to partake of the fruits of the Spirit which are in the just man; and the figs, if I may so express it, for which He hungers are love, which is the first of the fruits of the Spirit, and joy, and peace, and long-suffering, and the rest: which fruits as long as we bear we shall not be withered. But when He cometh unto us and seeketh fruit that He may eat, and we afford it not, it shall be said to us, 'let no fruit be on thee for ever.'" And again,—"so long as He cometh not to the fig-tree, nor seeketh fruit thereon, but is long-suffering, waiting if perchance the fig-tree shall bear fruit, it is not withered. But when He that hungereth for our fruit cometh, and we be found having

nothing, excepting only the promise of faith, having no fruit thereon, immediately we shall be withered, and shall have lost all appearance of being faithful." The same writer afterwards describes these seasons of visitation as the times of any peculiar temptation, when Jesus comes to us asking fruit, as in persecution and confession, or martyrdom: and in a temptation such as that of Joseph's continence and chastity; thus in each particular temptation requiring the fruit that is consequent upon it³. The same mode of exposition is expressed by Quesnel: "The faith, hope, charity, and good works of the faithful, are the fruits with which Christ satisfies His hunger. Words, promises, barren desires, and outward performances alone, are but useless and unprofitable leaves, upon which He does not feed⁴."

SECTION XII

THE BUYERS AND SELLERS IN THE TEMPLE

BUT that which our Lord had done in figure on the barren tree, He now proceeds to do more openly, on coming to Jerusalem itself, by an action more distinct and manifest in its character; but still, like all actions of our Blessed Lord, itself also a figure of something future, and looking forward to other events in themselves more important and real. They now pass on from the fig-tree down the Mount of Olives. "*And they come to Jerusalem*" (Mark), "*and Jesus*" (Matt., Mark) "*entered into the temple*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*of God*" (Matt.), which was situate on the sacred hill that rose, opposite

³ In Matt. tom. xvi. 27.

⁴ On St. Mark.

to the Mount of Olives, towards the west. It was now in the morning when our Lord arrived at the Temple, and a sight met His eyes which had not been there on the preceding evening; for the sacrifices being then over, or the preparations requisite for them, there would be no occasion for the continuance of this traffic. It was the same thing which, as St. John tells us, He had met with at the Passover, three years before, and had acted in like manner¹. "*And He began to*" (Mark, Luke) "*cast out (all,*" Matt.) "*those that were selling and trading*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*in (it,*" Luke) "*the temple, and overturned the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves*" (Matt., Mark). The sheep and oxen are not mentioned on this occasion, as on the previous one in St. John; nor the mode of His driving them out, by making a scourge of small cords, and pouring out the money of the exchangers, which circumstances St. John may have perhaps there mentioned to indicate more particularly the fulfilment of the Psalm, "the zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up." It has been thought² that this illicit traffic, going on in the Temple, was owing to the Priests and their dishonesty, and that they thus provided that persons coming up from all nations might have the means of sacrifice of every kind for their own gain; and that by means of usurers and money-changers they made themselves fresh profits, both by dishonest and forbidden usury;—that the money-changers were a means of evading the laws of usury by a sort of exchange or barter; and that all this rapacious dishonesty was carried on in the very temple of God itself. However that might be, it was not only this palpable profanation that our Lord thus earnestly prohibited: St. Mark adds, "*And*

¹ John ii. 14. See Nativity, pp. 312, 314.

² Aur. Cat.

He would not permit that any one should carry a vessel through the temple. And He taught them" (Mark) the meaning of this His conduct, "*saying unto them*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*It is written*" (Matt., Luke), "*Is it not written*" (Mark), "*My House shall be called (is,*" Luke) "*The House of Prayer*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), and St. Mark adds the important words "*to all the nations*" (Mark), "*but ye have made it a den of thieves*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). Thus did He, in these few words, refer them to His own prophets, adducing them as His solemn witnesses to this His entrance into His temple. For the former words refer them to that remarkable chapter in His evangelical prophet, where He declared He would bring "the sons of the stranger" to His "holy mountain, and make them joyful in" His "*House of prayer*³;" the latter sentence is an appeal to Jeremiah, and that still more remarkable prophecy, where God declared at length that He would do what was now coming on the Jews,—that He would do to them and unto this House, which is called by His Name, wherein they trust, and unto the place which He had given to them and to their fathers, as He had done to Shiloh,—that He would cast them out of His sight,—that intercession should avail not for them; because that House which was called by His name, had become in their eyes "*a den of robbers*⁴."

We cannot doubt but that this memorable action of our Lord's, thus twice occurring, and thus different in character to all the other actions of His life, does contain within it very much of Divine teaching, and is replete with great truths, which it will unfold to us on earnest and attentive consideration. We may suppose, from the manner in which St. John speaks of it on the first occa-

³ Isa. lvi. 6, 7. ⁴ Jer. vii. 11. 14. See Study of Gospels, P. iii. § xi.

sion, that it was the spontaneous and free expression of that holiness which cannot endure to behold the house of God profaned; that as David, the man after God's own heart, behaved himself as it were unseemly to do honour unto God; so after a manner infinitely more Divine was our Lord consumed with a zeal for His Father's house. It also, doubtless, teaches us the lesson, that it is impossible for us to be too zealous in preserving the holiness of sacred places, that this their holiness consists in their being God's "House of Prayer," which expression would render the case as strictly applicable to all Churches of Christian worship as to the Jewish temple; teaching us by unspeakable words the duty of reverence towards them.

Nor can we doubt but the action was also, like that of the fig-tree, in the highest degree significative of what our Lord was at this time about to do, namely, to drive the Jews, who made a traffic of holy things, out of His temple in His most just anger, and to purify His church. This He pointed out to them through His two prophets, who explained to them all the circumstances of it. For our Lord's allusions to the Old Testament seem rather to refer us to the entire prophecies to which they allude, than fully to prove any thing by the few words quoted from them, taken separately and alone.

Nor can we doubt but that it was also the fulfilment of that prophecy in Malachi, "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple; but who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" "And He shall sit," as He did now teaching in His temple, "as a refiner and purifier of silver." For certainly it was now that our Lord did literally come to that Temple of which the prophet spoke;

and now did He come with an especial power to try and to prove, and to purify; and on this occasion was His appearance accompanied with that awful severity which the prophet describes. But all persons on hearing this prophecy do naturally consider it refers more particularly to the appearance of our Lord on the last Day, to which only the word "suddenly" refers, for His second coming is distinguished from the first by its being "sudden." And therefore, if that prophetic description of the day of Judgment does also apply to this event; this event must likewise be figurative and prophetic of the Judgment also, when our Lord will come to drive out from His Temple all things that offend, and to cleanse and purify it thoroughly and entirely for ever. Since too our Lord's references to the prophets showed that this event signified the destruction of their city and temple on account of their "abominations:" and as that destruction of Jerusalem was so intimately connected with the destruction of the world in the prophetic accounts, both would be signified also in one and the same action. The circumstance moreover of its being repeated adds to the action a solemn and energetic force, carrying on the attention to a final fulfilment of it the *third* time in a higher sense. In like manner as the miracle of the loaves being twice performed especially calls our attention to the act, and leads us to look forward to something beyond—to the same miracle of mercy repeated the *third* time in a higher and more real manner, in the holy Eucharist, of which those two actions were the shadows going before. Let Scripture itself speak; it is "doubled twice," says Joseph to Pharaoh, "because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass."

Over and above the remarkable character of this action,

Origen speaks of it as being in itself highly miraculous ; and so also on the former occasion which St. John mentions, which he considered to indicate a Divine controlling power over the hearts of men, that He should have performed an action so transcending the dignity of the carpenter's son. And in this case He speaks of it, as "not inferior to His most extraordinary miracles, that one esteemed the son of a carpenter used such boldness and authority, casting them out in full assembly from the temple." He adds, it was such an action that "the governor of that nation would not easily have accomplished that which Jesus did." St. Jerome seems to have taken this supposition from Origen, and himself to have pursued it in like manner ; "This appears to me more wonderful than any miracle that He did, that one man, and at that time so vilely esteemed as to be afterwards crucified, while the Scribes and Pharisees were raging against Him, and seeing their gains were destroyed, should have been able, by the lashes of a single scourge, to cast out so great a multitude, and overturn the tables, and break the seats, and do other things which an immense army could not have done. For something fiery and starlike was gleaming from His eyes, and the majesty of the Godhead shone forth in His countenance." The description of this Latin writer, and indeed the whole nature of the action, is of itself so unlike the actions of our Blessed Lord, when He appeared as Saviour, that it immediately connects itself with His next manifestation as Judge. It is one of those circumstances that combine together the Crucifixion and the Judgment ; for thus each Divine dispensation contains within it some things that belong to another which is to ensue. This connexion adds a very deep and awful interest to the many subjects to which this action applies.

Although it bears more particularly on one great event, as its fullest development, namely, on our Lord's final appearance in His temple, yet in unfolding this and every other action of our Divine Lord, we must always keep in mind that its significations are not only infinitely vast, but also that they are infinitely manifold: which circumstance in inspired words cannot be better expressed than by that Scriptural description of it, to which we have often occasion to allude,—of their having “eyes before and after” and “round about.” Thus the action was first of all calculated to teach the Jews, by sending them to their own Prophets, the meaning of this His Divine visitation, and the terrible judgment that awaited them in their being cast out of God's Church. Secondly, it explained the conduct of the Messiah throughout this His dispensation,—that He was about to put a stop to legal sacrifices, which indeed had been thus basely profaned and prostituted to the neglect of their true intent and purpose; and that instead He was about to establish a spiritual worship,—that His temple was to become “a house of prayer to all nations,” and also the place of His own Divine teaching; for after driving them out He Himself taught in the temple. Thus St. Cyril of Alexandria takes it, as the true Priest after the order of Melchizedec, calling them from legal sacrifices unto that justification which is by faith in Christ.

In the next place, the action is one very significative, as teaching them, and us, and all mankind, that it is of the very deepest importance that we reverence sacred places, with a zeal that even consumes us and makes us base in the eyes of men,—a zeal which, as it can never equal that of our Blessed Lord, can never be too great, if rightly directed; that a spiritual worship is there required, and that therefore not such outward actions only, but worldly

thoughts, of buying and selling and the like, profane the temple of God.

In the fourth place, it applies in a very palpable and strong manner, as the Fathers abundantly testify, to the Christian Church; for, as Quesnel says, "none but the Catholic Church can be 'called of all nations the house of prayer,' and therefore none but that can be the house of God⁵:" and thus they apply it to those who in various ways make a trade of sacred things in the Church. Upon this Origen dwells very forcibly⁶: "And now I consider that the Church is the Temple built of living stones, and that there are therein certain persons who live not as in the Church, but as they that 'war after the flesh;' who through their wickedness make the house of prayer, built of living stones, a den of thieves. For who that hath perceived the sins that prevail in some Churches, by those who consider the godliness of others to be their own gain; and when they ought to live entirely according to the Gospel alone, instead of doing so, collect wealth and great possessions; who, seeing this, will not say that the mystical holiness of Churches has become a den of thieves?" He then describes Christ as weeping over His Spiritual Jerusalem more than over that earthly Jerusalem of old, saying, "What profit is there in My blood?" and with the Prophet, "Woe is Me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage, there is no cluster to eat, My soul desired the first ripe fruit. The good man is perished out of the earth; and there is none upright among men⁷." St. Augustin in like manner⁸ explains it of the Church, and says, "He hath signified that there would be those in His Church who

⁵ On St. Mark.

⁷ Mic. vii. 1, 2.

⁶ In Matt. tom. xvi. 21.

⁸ Quæst. Evan. l. ii. 48.

would be rather pursuing their own gains, or find therein a receptacle for the concealment of their crimes, than follow after the love of Christ." And so also St. Ambrose⁹; "The Lord therefore teacheth us generally that secular contracts ought to be absent from the temple of God. But spiritually He drove out the money-changers, who out of the money of the Lord, that is out of the Holy Scripture, seek for gain." But Origen in the above passage particularly applies it to the Orders of the Clergy; "Let each one of those that sit on the Ecclesiastical seat, and love the first seats in the Synagogues, take heed lest Jesus, when He cometh, shall overturn his seat. And let each of those who collect money from the deaconship take care, considering this Scripture that is laid before us, that he no longer heap up money on the tables, lest Jesus should overturn them. Moreover, let them who are being led on by the cares and concerns of life into buying and selling, take heed lest Jesus when He cometh shall cast them out of His temple. For he that hath been cast out hath no hope to return."

In the fifth place, as Scripture declares each individual Christian to be the temple of God, in a higher and more awful sense than ever the visible temple of the Jews was, therefore this Scripture refers in the strongest manner to God's visitations and to Christ's coming to this His temple. Thus Quesnel, "Every one of the faithful is the temple of God; and therefore ought to have the same zeal for the purity of his own heart, which Christ had for the sanctity of His visible temple. Avarice, self-interest, fondness for temporal things, and all other lusts of this life, which fill the heart, are the buyers and sellers which must be cast out of this house of God, consecrated by

⁹ In Luc. lib. ix. 18.

Baptism for the offering up of prayer and adoration." And St. Jerome in like manner, "What we have said concerning Churches let each consider concerning himself, for the Apostle saith 'ye are the temple of God : ' let there be no trafficking therefore in the abode of your breast, no coveting gifts : lest Jesus enter in anger and severity, and cleanse His temple, by no other means than that of the scourge." St. Austin also speaks of the scourge of cords as the scourge of our own vices, which prefigure the time when Christ shall say "bind them hand and foot : " St. Ambrose, as that moral teaching which acts as a scourge on the sinner's conscience. And Gregory says, "The temple and the house of God is the mind and conscience of the faithful, which if it bringeth forth perverse thoughts to the injury of one's neighbour, they reside there as thieves in their den." Origen also adds, "By the temple may be understood the soul of the zealous Christian."

But now all these interpretations do of course but carry on the mind to that one great and final fulfilment of this significative action, when the Lord shall appear in His Church at the last Day : for as it taught the Jew that God was about to visit with the scourge the earthly Jerusalem and visible temple ; so does it teach the Christian that He is about to visit and cleanse the spiritual Jerusalem and His unearthly temple, and to drive out from thence all that offend with the rod of eternal destruction. All other lessons, which holy men have considered to belong to that action, do necessarily imply and suppose that one great appearing of which the Prophet Malachi more particularly speaks. For of course when they explain that temple as signifying the soul of man, they carry on the application to Christ's appearing in that

His temple on the last Day. And when they take that temple to signify the Church Catholic, it is with reference to Christ's appearing in the same to cleanse it for Himself: "or to that expected Divine judgment," to use Origen's words, "when He shall enter into the universal temple of God, the whole Church constructed in the name of Christ, and shall cast out those who spend their time in buying and selling, when they are esteemed to be in the temple of God." Or, as Quesnel says, "The severity which Christ exercises against the profaners of the figurative temple, is but a shadow of that fury with which He will punish in hell all those who profane the living temples by their impurities, the Churches by their irreverence, the Priesthood of Christ by ambition, the merchandize of benefits, and corruption of manners."

These two circumstances are all that are recorded of this day, although our Lord probably spent the greater part of it in teaching in the temple, for St. Luke adds to the account, "*And He was daily teaching in the temple.*" We may reverently conclude that every word that He taught was replete with treasures of knowledge and truth. But the Holy Spirit, by choosing that these alone should be recorded, may intend to intimate to us that these two actions contained within them, to us who may read and understand what they signify, all that we need know. For two very important warnings are here set before us, couched not in words only, but in expressive actions, both of them speaking to us of our own day of visitation;—the first when our Lord comes to us in this our day seeking for fruit and findeth none: and the second when He shall appear in the Christian temple on the last day. When these two are brought before us for our consideration, it may be superfluous to add any thing more. They contain

within them all that is needful for us to know. However great and Divine were the truths that our Lord delivered on that day, however important they were to those who heard them, it is not so concerning for us to be told of them, as that we should consider and act up to all the teaching contained in those two actions. They might have diverted our attention from these events without profiting us, more than the undivided consideration of these alone.

But we are told, "*and the Scribes and the Pharisees heard*" of it (Mark),—of that action of our Lord's, not perhaps being themselves present in the temple at that early hour to witness it,—"*and sought how they might kill Him*" (Mark). And probably St. Luke is speaking of the same time when he says, "*And the Chief Priests and the Scribes and the chief of the people sought to kill Him, and found not what they should do to Him*" (Luke). "*For they feared Him,*" says St. Mark. Perhaps partly from something in the authority and power with which He spake, as St. John remarks on another occasion, that those who were sent to take Him could not do so, and returned, saying, "no man spake as this Man," alluding, as this Evangelist generally does, to something superhuman and Divine. But on this occasion St. Mark gives another reason for this fear, "*because all the people were exceedingly astonished at His doctrine.*" Which words seem to imply the same awful authority which is often ascribed to Him,—and yet at the same time such as to create the very highest interest and attention; St. Luke's words are "*for the whole of the people hung upon Him*" (or upon His words) "*listening to Him.*"

This teaching in the temple, the substance of which is not communicated to us, continued, it appears, through

the whole of the day; for St. Mark, being more apt to introduce incidental notices of time, adds, "*And when it was evening, He went forth without the city.*"

SECTION XIII

THE RETURN TO THE TEMPLE

BUT "*the fig-tree*" which our Lord had spoken to "*was withered immediately. And the disciples when they saw it were amazed, saying, How immediately hath the fig-tree withered away!*" (Matt.) For "*it was early on the following morning, as they were going by,*" on the same road from Bethany to the temple at Jerusalem, "*they beheld the fig-tree withered from the very roots. And*" it was "*Peter,*" who, "*calling to mind*" what had passed on the preceding morning, "*saith unto Him, Master, behold, the fig-tree which Thou cursedst is withered*" (Mark). "*And Jesus answered and said unto them*" (Matt., Mark); for although it was Peter that spoke, which he tells us by his Evangelist, yet it was as it were the speech of the disciples generally, as St. Matthew records it. Here, as often, there is something that mysteriously intimates Twelve in One and One in Twelve. For as St. Matthew is more apt to speak in the plural number than to particularize, so he now speaks generally of "*the disciples,*" who "*were amazed.*" But we find in St. Mark that our Lord speaks to them in the plural number, though addressed, as he mentions, by St. Peter only, which indicates it to be the same occasion the two Evangelists are speaking of. But of course when the disciples speak, it must be one more

particularly that addresses our Lord, and St. Mark tells us that this one was St. Peter. It was dried up immediately when it was cursed, say St. Austin and Theophylact, as St. Matthew mentions, but the disciples did not perceive it at the moment when it was withering, but the next day, as St. Mark specifies, when it was already withered. The miracle was the more remarkable, says St. Chrysostom, inasmuch as that tree is by nature one of the most moist and succulent of trees. The same writer¹ observes of this miracle, that as our Lord now conferred blessings, and punished none, He gave this demonstration of His power to punish; and wishing not to display this His power on mankind, and that by a word He could dry up all power of the Jews, He thus shows it on the fig-tree. And St. Hilary² very well says, "In this we shall find an instance of the goodness of the Lord. For when He wished to adduce an example of the salvation which was procured through Him, He exercised His efficacious power on human bodies: but when He wished to set forth a type of His judgments, He represents the future by the destruction of a tree." Isidore carries on a similar sentiment, "Since in all His miracles the Jews had seen Him affording nothing painful to any one, and supposed that He was only able to benefit, and had no power to retaliate on the wicked, through an unfeeling substance He shows that ungracious people that He had power also to punish, though from His goodness He was not willing to do so." St. Athanasius in like manner says, "As He was going to suffer, that the disciples might not think it was through weakness, He manifested His power on the inanimate fig-tree, and His love by the boundless long-suffering which He exercised towards mankind."

¹ Hom. in Matt. lxvii.

² Com. in Matt. xxi.

Origen observes of this miracle, "That it was the Synagogue of the Jews, which should become unfruitful until the end of the world, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in." And of the astonishment of the disciples, at seeing it so immediately withered, he speaks as if they already in a mystery beheld the withering up so speedily of the Jewish nation: and that to this our Lord alluded when He said, that they should not only do that which is done to the fig-tree, that is, dry up from the very roots the Jewish nation, which they afterwards did, when they left it, and the living power passed from them to the Gentiles in consequence; but also more than that. Bede also notices, that the drying up from the very root indicated the thorough and entire destruction of the Jewish nation; from the roots, from within, the very juice of life, the internal life, ceases.

But although this significative action so obviously applies to the Jewish nation, that perhaps there is no one who does not so apply it—although he may never have heard of the mystical mode of interpretation, nor have ever considered to what an extent the Scriptures are capable of it—yet there is no allusion to its containing any reference of this kind, either made by our Lord Himself, or by His disciples who witnessed it, or by the Evangelists who record it. This is similar to other occasions when our Lord uses such figurative language, and does not explain it: or performs miracles, having, as it appears, spiritual lessons, but does not allude to their being contained in them. This His conduct is also similar to that which He pursues in the Old Testament, where in speaking to mankind in type and figure He makes no mention of those types and figures being emblematical. And so likewise in His moral providence, the lessons which all things convey are left

untold, and remain in each case for individuals to discern. The reason of this may be, that the discernment of those lessons is in Scripture attributed to faith, and expressly to the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Such a signification, therefore, in this action, is left for the disciples to perceive afterwards, like prophecy itself, to be understood in its fulfilment, and to mark therein the counsels of God, and not to be discerned before. Thus would the Fathers intimate that all the events recorded in the Gospels may be in themselves figurative, notwithstanding their literal and historical truths as events, and their more obvious and simple instruction; that as the Old Testament by its histories, ceremonies, and institutions, contained the New in a figure; and the Church in the wilderness was but the shadow of the true tabernacle of the Christian Church; so in like manner the things recorded in the Gospels may stand throughout as certain figures and palpable representations of great spiritual developments in the Church, and this without derogating from the literal accuracy and obvious meaning of Scripture. Indeed, nothing so effectually prevents men from explaining away the letter, as a right sense of a deep spiritual meaning concealed under it. It has been shown in another place³ that all external nature may be considered as one great parable, and the written word of God another, and His general Providence over the world and His dealings with ourselves another. They are all parables in divers degrees and manners; parables that require a certain religious discernment to unfold them, and to find therein the mysteries, as our Lord expresses it, of the kingdom of Heaven.

“Jesus answered and said unto them, *Have faith in God. For*” (Mark) “*verily I say unto you*” (Matt., Mark),

³ See Study of Gospels, P. iv. § iv.

"if ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done unto the fig-tree, but if ye shall say," (Matt.) or "if any one of you shall say" (Mark) "to this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea" (Matt., Mark); "and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that the things which he saith do come to pass" (Mark): "it shall come to pass" (Matt.); "it shall be unto him whatsoever he saith. Wherefore I say unto you, All things which ye ask for, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and they shall be unto you" (Mark). "And all things ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt.). Thus our Lord in speaking of prayer proceeds, as He usually does, to point out the two essential requisites on our part to render it effectual, faith and forgiveness of injuries; "lifting up holy hands," as the Apostle says, "without wrath or doubting." And now having spoken of faith,—that we are to be fully assured not only that we shall, but that we actually do receive what we pray for,—He proceeds to lay stress as usual on the other also. "And when ye shall stand praying, forgive if ye have aught against any one: that your Father Who is in Heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye forgive not, neither will your Father, Who is in Heaven, forgive your trespasses" (Mark).

Thus therefore on this, as on other such occasions, instead of alluding to the mysterious and deeper knowledge of His kingdom, which may have been contained in it, our Lord makes the circumstance and the figure serve to teach the disciples that which at this time they most needed, and which it was most obviously calculated to convey to them. For the destruction of the Jewish nation was not the point which so immediately concerned them, as the means by which they might themselves escape

being involved in that destruction,—which was only in the Christian Church. And the Christian Church was founded, as on a rock, on faith in Christ; it was to this faith that this miracle encouraged and invited them. As Christ had thus showed them that by His own inherent power He could do all things, so He teaches them that He would do the like for all Christians if they had faith in Him; and indeed His doing thus so dependeth on their faith, that if their faith in Him was greater, their miracles also, or rather His miracles by them, should exceed this. Such is the foundation of all Christian power, as being in and through Christ,—in firm undoubting faith. If the prayer is by the Spirit, then is it in unwavering assurance; for “the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God,” and therefore knoweth that He shall obtain. But this power in Christians is from their being accepted in and through the atonement of Christ; and this requires that their hearts should be in a state corresponding, and answering to this their new condition—as those among the creations of God who are accepted, not as righteous persons, but as penitents. And this can only be shown by the new and cardinal law of Christian forgiveness. Out of the fulness of Christ’s merits will they receive according to this measure, being forgiven according as they forgive; being merciful as God is merciful, as revealed in the Christian dispensation towards us, in order that God also may be merciful even as they are. The development of this temper is nothing else but that charity of which St. Paul speaks. This power of faith is expressed, as on other occasions, by the proverbial Eastern phrase of being able “to remove mountains.”

But as these words were addressed to the Apostles, and especially to St. Peter, we cannot but suppose that they

had great and Divine meanings also which had a particular reference to themselves. Might it be that as the Jewish nation on which our Lord found no fruit was withered, so also this mountain,—whether it be the Mount of Olives, which they were descending, or the Mount Sion, which arose before them, the mountain of God, His “Holy Hill,” “the Mountain of Holiness,”—the Jewish legal Church itself, at the word of the Apostles, should be cast into the sea, and the place of it should nowhere be found? As when they shook off the dust of their feet, and said, “seeing ye judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” And where now is that holy mountain of God? It is lost in the sea of God’s judgments according to their word, and instead of it the knowledge of Christ fills the world “as the waters cover the sea.” Or may it be that, according to the power given to the Apostles in the Church, to loose and to bind in Christ’s name, they should remove the mountain of our sins and cast them into the deep? So Origen considers it,—“Not only should they be able to do that which is done unto the fig-tree, which they did afterwards when they dried up the Jewish nation; but also the promise is given them of such power among men, that if they say to the mountain, which He pointed out to them, ‘Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done.’ For from each of those who are in debt there is removed, by the disciples of Christ, the heavy mountain of wickedness, that is, Satan, for He who hath conquered him, removes it, and casts it into the sea, the abyss; casts him into the place of punishment of which he is worthy⁴.” We may remember that in a similar passage in St. Luke, it is the sycamine tree; “If ye say

⁴ In Matt. tom. xvi. 26.

to this sycamine tree, Be thou rooted up and planted in the sea⁵," which is there interpreted by St. Chrysostom and St. Ambrose as the evil spirit—the spreading tree of evil thoughts, on the leaves of which the undying worm is fed, which shall be cast into the sea by the prayer of faith. St. Hilary describes the mountain in the same way; "The Lord promises them, that if they have faith, they shall be able to do, not only this, but even greater things than these. They, indeed, were to judge Israel according to the assurances given before, but also they should obtain all power over the devil, whom He calls the mountain⁶."

There are other modes of explaining the "mountain" in this passage, and which occur to one's thoughts, but as there appears nothing like a generally received mode of interpretation, perhaps it is better left; for indeed we know that Christ Himself is in Scripture described as "the mountain." And St. Austin⁷, though he sanctions the former interpretation, by speaking of it as the mountain of pride, which the servant of God should cast from him, yet he also suggests, that "by their preaching the Gospel, the Lord Himself, Who is called the mountain, should be taken from the Jews and cast among the Gentiles afar, as into the sea." And this is followed up by the writer of the commentary attributed to St. Jerome, who says, "Christ, therefore, Who is the mountain growing from the stone cut without hands, is taken and cast into the sea, as the Apostles say that they transfer to the Gentiles the Word of God, which they judged themselves unworthy to hear."

It is, therefore, one of those subjects on which we shall

⁵ Luke xvii. 6.

⁶ In Matt. xxi. 7.

⁷ Quæst. Evan. lib. i. c. 29.

dwell most safely and wisely on the first and simple lesson alone, which instructs us that there is no difficulty, in our Christian course, but that we shall be enabled to overcome it by the aid of prayer; and if we act up to this Divine lesson, God will reveal unto us the higher mysteries of His kingdom, so far as it is good for us to know them.

PART II

The Teaching in the Temple

“The Lord is in His holy Temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him.”

SECTION I

THE QUESTION OF AUTHORITY

“**A**ND *they come again to Jerusalem*” (Mark). There our Lord goes, as His custom was, to teach throughout the day in the temple; and from the manner in which it is spoken of, one might suppose that it was on more than two days that He continued thus to teach them, not only the Monday and Tuesday, but perhaps a third day also, if not a fourth. But the circumstances and teaching recorded are not more than might well be comprised in one day; and in the events in the temple there appears an order and relation, as if they did occur on one day. But on which of these days it is difficult to determine. The question of the Pharisees which is first recorded might lead us to suppose, that it was on the day after our Lord drove the buyers from the temple, on the Tuesday. For that the question of His

authority was on account of His driving them out of the temple would appear both from the circumstance itself, and from this, that on the former occasion this act was attended with the same inquiry, "what sign showest Thou unto us seeing that Thou doest these things?" And indeed it is referred by St. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and others, to this cause. Not that they ventured thus to question Him, as St. Chrysostom observes, when He was expelling the buyers, on account of the miracles which, St. Matthew says, that He wrought in the temple; but when, after that, He was seen teaching the people. Yet, on the other hand, the circumstances of our Lord's departure from the temple, and the discourses ensuing would appear to indicate that such was His final taking leave of the temple on the last day of His teaching. These are difficulties for which it appears impossible to come to any satisfactory solution; but perhaps they do not amount to more than this, whether the circumstances we are going to enter into took place on the Tuesday or the Wednesday. In the order of the narrative they seem naturally to arise on the Tuesday: and the conduct of the Chief Priests, as shown during this teaching in the temple, and the various attempts they then made on our Saviour's life by subtlety, must have taken place, one would conclude, before the agreement was made with Judas for His apprehension by force, which we know took place at a Council held on Wednesday for that purpose. It seems also agreeable to the account in St. Mark, the most attentive to the order of events. St. Matthew merely mentions, "*And when He had come into the temple.*" St. Mark, upon mentioning their coming again to Jerusalem, after their observing the withered fig-tree, adds, "*And when He was walking in the temple they come unto Him.*" As if before the crowds

had fully gathered around Him, which we find they afterwards did, "as He sat teaching," His enemies had taken this opportunity. For our Lord speaks of Himself as sitting in the temple: "I sat daily with you teaching in the temple." But St. Luke, not speaking of the miracle of the fig-tree, mentions the circumstance more generally, without defining the time. "*And it came to pass on one of those days, as He was teaching the people in the temple, and preaching the Gospel, there came upon Him*" (Luke), "*there came up to Him*" (Matt., Mark), "*as He was teaching*" (Matt.), "*the Chief Priests (and the Scribes,*" Mark, Luke), "*and the elders*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*of the people*" (Matt.), "*and spoke unto Him*" (Luke), "*saying*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*Tell us*" (Luke) "*by what authority doest Thou these things? And who hath given Thee this authority?*" (Matt., Mark, Luke,) "*that Thou shouldest do these things*" (Mark). Thus studiously, as it were, putting to Him two questions, that when, with regard to the first, they knew that the authority our Lord claimed was Divine,—as when He spoke of "My Father's house" in expelling the buyers,—they might further ask Him to adduce His proof of this commission, who had given it Him: and perhaps this is one reason of our Lord's appeal to the Baptist, as the human witness of His commission from God. "*Jesus*" (Matt., Mark) "*answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one word*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*and answer Me*" (Mark), "*and tell Me*" (Luke), or "*which if ye tell Me*" (Matt.), "*I also will tell you by what authority I do these things*" (Matt., Mark). "*The Baptism of John*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*whence was it?*" (Matt.) "*was it from Heaven or of men?*" (Matt., Mark, Luke,) "*answer Me*" (Mark). "*But they reasoned among themselves, saying, If we shall*

say from Heaven, He will say (unto us," Matt.), "Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, Of men" (Matt., Mark, Luke); "we fear the multitude" (Matt.), or "they feared the people" (Mark). For St. Mark by this change of the person does not so much put the words into their mouth, "we fear the people," for they would hardly have openly expressed it, but rather suggests that this fear was in their own hearts the answer. "All the people," they said, "will stone us, for they are persuaded that John is a Prophet" (Luke): "for all men held John as a Prophet" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "indeed" (Mark). "And they answered" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "and said unto Jesus" (Matt., Mark), "They knew not from whence he was" (Luke); "We do not know" (Matt., Mark). "And He also" (Matt.) "and Jesus" (Mark, Luke) "answering" (Mark), "saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things" (Matt., Mark, Luke).

Thus were they caught in their own craftiness by the simplicity of Divine wisdom; for their ruling passion was a regard for man rather than God in every thing. On account of the fear of man they acknowledged John as a Prophet, and from the fear of man they would not confess Christ. They feared the people, they had no reverence for the holy John, nor for the Divine authority which he evinced; but the people they feared, for they who fear not God must fear something; they must feed on dust and ashes, if they hunger not for God's righteousness. But it may be asked, did our Lord mean by this question merely to silence the Pharisees? or did He really intend it to furnish the answer to their inquiry? Now, as our Lord's discourses were divinely calculated to reach the hearts of all, which were perfectly known to

Him ; and as some of these Pharisees were determinedly blind and hardened, bent on the worst crimes, and had no good intent in this inquiry ; according to the universal custom of our Lord He would not instruct such, but leave them to their own blindness ;—thus caught in the net which they had prepared for others. “For they were by no means worthy of such knowledge,” says Origen, “and on this account He answers them not, but puts a question to them.” “For two causes,” says Bede, “the knowledge of the truth is to be denied to them who seek it ; when he who asks is incapable of understanding it, or from contempt or hatred of the truth unworthy to have it disclosed to him¹.” Thus also another commentator ; “It was not that they might answer and listen to Him, but that being entangled they might not ask ; for He had Himself enjoined, ‘Give not that which is holy to dogs.’ And even if He had spoken, it would have profited them not, for the will that is darkened is incapable of perceiving the things of light. For one ought to instruct a person who inquires, but to confound him that tempts by a stroke of reasoning ; and not publish to such a one the virtue of the mystery².” St. Jerome says, “the Lord could have confuted the calumny of His tempters by a simple answer, but He puts a question to them, so wisely contrived that they must be condemned either by their silence or their knowledge.” They were condemned indeed both by their silence and by their knowledge ; for they knew, and if they had been willing to act upon that knowledge, it would have been enough : our Lord would answer them, and fill them with that knowledge ; but they said, “we know not,” that is, they knew and would not con-

¹ Aur. Cat. in Marc.

² Pseudo-Chrys. Aur. Cat. in Matt.

fess, and so "that which they seemed to have" was taken from them. It is indeed precisely according to the universal rule of God's dealing; and our Lord's answer, that He would not tell them if they would not answer respecting John, is analogous to His unvaried conduct of not telling them openly His authority, but leaving them to the divinely appointed means of arriving at the knowledge of it. An obedient and loyal spirit sees at once that power is of God alone, and if coming with adequate credentials affords a glad recognition of it; and the perception of those very credentials depends on the same character. Thus it has been well observed, that "every man according as he himself is, so does he esteem another; the fornicator considers no one to be chaste: the chaste man does not easily suspect fornicators; so he who is not a Priest from God, suspects the Priesthood of no one to be so." For thus if they had been themselves truly Priests of God, they would have recognized His authority in another coming from God, though not in the same manner; that is to say, if they had acted up to all that was intended by the Levitical Priesthood, and had themselves followed after that mortification, that purity of heart and life, and that faith in the Messiah which their circumcision, their washings and sacrifices, signified and required of them, they would have recognized the true Priest. And although Christ was not a Priest, according to the Levitical Priesthood, yet if they had attended more to the internal holiness of the Law than to the external ordinances, they would have discovered Him Who was a Priest after the order of Melchizedec. God is not used to supersede His own appointed means for the benefit of those that reject them, nor would He now introduce any fresh testimony of His

authority, for those already given were sufficient. "They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them," is the saying of their father Abraham ; if they were Abraham's true children this would have sufficed.

It was indeed referring them to the appointed testimony of God ; and yet, notwithstanding, we may conclude that in this reply of our Lord's, "there were," as Origen says, "hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge laid up," for those who were really desirous to know the truth ; and doubtless to such an open and public question our Lord would give a full and satisfactory answer for those who needed it. Indeed it would appear that the very question itself, and the time and place in which it was put, was divinely ordered by a mysterious Providence, to place the whole subject of our Lord's authority and commission on its legitimate and highest grounds, at the very commencement of this His public preaching,—His teaching the whole world, sitting visibly in His own temple, after He had cleansed the same,—an authority from God, coming in His own appointed way, and testified by His Prophets ; but only discernible by faith, as the facts now before their eyes would prove. The Divine control which brought about this question at this crisis is noticed by St. Hilary, and "that the Pharisees who had seen so much before, should now especially be solicitous on this point, and inquire concerning His authority ; for the circumstances," he adds, "which were now being carried on, contained within them a vast secret of things future, and therefore they are instinctively impelled to put the question in this particular shape, and so to publish all that dilemma in which they were left." Origen also speaks of our Lord's answer as having a great object in view : "He asks them in return, instead of answering,

that by their not answering the things concerning John, He also might reasonably persuade those who would listen to Him, that it was not without a purpose He said unto them, 'Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things³.' "The question was put not sophistically," says Theophylact, "and without a purpose, but because John was the person who bore witness." It was indeed the very object of His mission; and, moreover, this reply respecting John was to the people that now heard our Saviour, the strongest confirmation of His authority, for they themselves admitted the truth of John's mission. And among the Pharisees themselves there were some, we know, who were reclaimable and considerate, and this answer might lead them to that great and high evidence to which the beloved Evangelist appeals in the opening of his Gospel,—to the great Forerunner coming in the way of righteousness, and the Herald especially to the Pharisees and the Chief Priests⁴. And it is to be observed that these Priests had themselves sent a formal deputation to the Baptist; a Priestly deputation, as to one of a Priestly family; and his formal answer, referring to the evangelical Prophet, is on record: this question, therefore, of our Lord's throws them back on that combined testimony which God had vouchsafed with especial reference to them, as coming in the regular way of the Law, and of legal righteousness. For doubtless the preaching of the Baptist was to the Pharisees the means appointed by God to bring them to Christ, through the Law, as it were, their "Schoolmaster." This appeal of our Lord's is the more observable, as His usual reply to the Pharisees is from the Scriptures: in both cases, therefore, whether referring to the Old Testament or to the Baptist, He turns

³ In Matt. tom. xvii. 3.

⁴ See Nativity, P. ii. § vii.

their minds to those means of their instruction, which, being appointed of God, were of course the wisest for that purpose that could be, and in a serious consideration of which they would find the truth. And it is a most remarkable circumstance, that at this very time the readiest objection which was in their mouths, to dissuade men from believing that Christ was the Messiah, was this—that Elias must first come. It is therefore to this very Elias that our Lord appeals; but to receive John the Baptist, as Elias, did depend, as He said, on the heart: “If ye can receive it, this is Elias.” The Baptist was he of whom it was said, “I have ordained a lantern for Mine Anointed; as for His enemies, I shall clothe them with shame.” So truly was John the light or lantern of the Lord, as a star sent to precede the sun. Or rather we should apply to him the words with which Scripture, with a wonderful force and propriety, describes him: he was “the voice crying in the wilderness,” as one who “did no miracle,” but whose one great and sole office was to proclaim, as a herald from Heaven; not by any distinct vocal and loud declaration, but by such appeals to the conscience as should prepare the road for Christ’s coming in the hearts of men. And therefore his whole dispensation, his doctrine, profession, preaching, and the like, our Lord here designates by one word, that of his Baptism,—“the Baptism of John.” For, as Maldonatus well observes, as the Circumcision of Moses implied a keeping of the whole Law, so the Baptism of John implied all his teaching. And the very term by which our Lord here speaks of the ministry of His forerunner is to be noticed, when He speaks of it as John’s Baptism; for many as there have been who have baptized, and many greater than John the Baptist, yet Baptism is attributed to none

as theirs, except to him; the reason probably was, that when Apostles baptized, it was not their Baptism, but Christ's, it was Christ baptizing in them; and for that very reason indeed they were greater than John. Thus St. Augustin says⁵ that,—John received indeed his power to baptize from Him Whom he afterwards baptized; but the Baptism which He received, is called the Baptism of John—he alone received such a gift.—No one of just men before him, no one after him, received a Baptism which should be called his Baptism; for John came to baptize with the water of repentance, by preparing a way for the Lord; not by internal cleansing, which a mere man could not do.

Let us suppose that instead of this, our Lord had simply answered that His authority was of God; they would then have asked Him what proof He gave of this, and required a sign. And we know how our Lord always received this requisition. Or they would have asked Him for a witness; in which case He would have adduced the testimony of the Baptist, and pointed to the people who had received John, and were willing to listen to his voice, and could recognize the kingdom of God; for although they could not discern it, yet “Wisdom is justified of her” own “children.” And something like this was our Lord's appeal on another occasion⁶: “If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of Me. . . . Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man. . . . I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me.” Yet the very ac-

⁵ In Joan. Tr. v. 4, 5, 6.

⁶ See Ministry, 2nd Year, p. 26.

knowledge of these miracles would depend on faith, and on those preparations of the heart which are from God, and in the way of His teaching; whereas the beholding them without this faith is, as we may observe from many instances, unto condemnation. They had, we know, already witnessed His most mighty miracles, and had attributed them to Beelzebub, in so doing approaching to the sin against the Holy Ghost; and they had already refused the testimony of John. What therefore was there now to be done, but to leave them to the condemnation of their own silence? Thus "every mouth shall be stopped" in the judgment of God. Moreover, if our Lord does not appeal to the testimony of His miracles on this occasion, it may be observed, that there may be a right faith which will itself reject another (when the false Christ shall appear), who may come even with the appearance of miracles. For this question may be asked of Antichrist, "By what authority doest thou these things?" for he will come "with signs and lying wonders," and with the claim of authority, "sitting in the temple of God," as God. But Christ has the forerunner whom the Prophets foretold, to prepare the way by preaching of repentance; and as many as repent, according to his preaching, will discern the Christ to Whom he bears witness. Whereas, on the contrary, but according to the same law, impenitent wickedness, or the absence of repentance, will prepare the way for Christ's enemy in those who will receive him. For Antichrist will come in the power of the evil one, "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish;" for "God will send upon them a strong delusion . . . because they have had pleasure in unrighteousness." Thus they were silent, and Christ was silent, leaving it to the silent Witness to

plead within, among those who could understand His "still and small voice." And thus, as Job had said, "the poor hath hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth⁷;" or as the Psalmist, "The righteous will consider this, and the mouth of all wickedness shall be stopped." "Whoso is wise will ponder these things, and they shall understand⁸."

We may reasonably suppose that this sitting of Christ in His temple at Jerusalem does set forth in figure His sitting in His Church to the end of the world; referring still to the proofs of His authority, to that order of His providential dealings, wherein He is to be discerned by faith only, and refusing all other testimony. "And now, too," says Origen, "is Christ in the temple, His Church, and teacheth therein; and some persons, like those Chief Priests and Scribes of the people, hear Him indeed, but obtain not an answer, being unworthy to know those things concerning which they are desirous to learn⁹."

Thus our Lord was then fulfilling what the Prophet Malachi had spoken of this His coming, that "He shall sit," in His temple, "as a refiner, and purifier of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi," being Himself the Priest after the order of Melchizedec. The legal sacrifices which had been found unprofitable and vain, had been cast out by Him who had said, "Burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin hast Thou not required: then said I, Lo, I come." He came and took His seat in His own temple, bearing the testimony of John, and of His Father's works, and sits as a Lawgiver in His own Holy City. "He came unto His own, but His own received Him not."

⁷ Job v. 16.

⁸ Ps. cvii. 42, 43.

⁹ Tom. xviii. in Matt.

SECTION II

THE PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS

BUT our Lord does not leave the matter here; by His own inherent and Divine authority of teaching, He proceeds to apply to them more closely the testimony of John; to point out the mode in which he had been received by different persons, and the access they had in consequence found to the Heavenly Kingdom. Here our Lord by implication fully answers the question concerning John, that his mission was Divine, and he a Divine forerunner. "*But how does it appear to you?*" (Matt.) He puts it to them as a question, making them the judges in their own case, rather than as if they were the party accused; and when they acknowledge fairly the truth, as in a disinterested case, then He unfolds the bearing of what He had before shadowed forth and partly veiled: the same is the case in our Lord's parable afterwards of the vineyard; and indeed for this reason He puts this also to them by a parable. It may be observed that Almighty God is often represented as questioning the sinner, and drawing, as it were, his own condemnation from himself. Thus does He question Adam, and Cain, and holy David, after his fall,—and the Jews, throughout the Prophets, and in the Gospels,—and the unprofitable servant at the great Judgment; "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant." All this may refer to some circumstance at the last account, that from their own admission and knowledge the guilty will be condemned on that Day; as, for instance, when men

approve those things which they do not practise, when they condemn others for actions which they themselves are guilty of, when they judge differently in temporal matters from what they do in religious, they are proved guilty by their own admission. That so by the very acknowledgment of sinners the justice of God may be established in His condemnation of them, as the Psalmist says in his memorable confession: "That Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest."

"How does it appear to you? *A man had two sons: and he went to the first and said, Son, go, work this day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not. But afterwards he repented and went. And he went to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, Sir. And he went not. Which of the two did the will of the father? They say unto Him, The first.*" Having thus obtained the fair judgment of the parable out of their own mouths, our Lord proceeds to apply it: "*Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go before you into the kingdom of God. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not. But the publicans and the harlots believed him. And ye, when ye saw it, repented not afterwards, to believe him*" (Matt.). He came, not to them, but to you, in the very way of legal righteousness, of which ye make such great professions; and ye made a show of receiving him, by sending to inquire of him, and by coming to his Baptism, and, like the wicked Herod, were "willing for a season to rejoice in his light." But they, who made no such professions of religious observance, "justified God, being baptized with the Baptism of John. But the Pharisees and Lawyers rejected the

counsel of God towards themselves, being not baptized of him." And this expression of their not repenting afterwards, when they saw the publicans and harlots receive him, seems to imply, that in the teaching of the Baptist these Pharisees had two periods of probation; first, when they sent to him, and he appeared to them as a prophet; and secondly, when he was received by the multitude. For both of these were circumstances to attract their attention to his preaching; and, therefore, when, on the preceding question of our Lord, they would not deny that John was a prophet for fear of the people, they were bearing testimony against themselves; for this reception on the part of the people was in fact a real appeal to them from God to attend to it. John was a prophet indeed; the people received him as such—why do ye not? Your own hearts will tell you.

But we often find that what is set forth in individual cases, is but a sample of what takes place in whole classes of persons, and even nations. And although this, which had been fulfilled before their eyes, appears to be the more close and immediate application of the parable; yet, at the same time, under the descriptions of the Publicans and the Pharisees, it seems intended to represent the Gentiles and the Jews. The Gentiles, who had left the worship of God, and made no profession of serving Him; and the Jews, who rested in the Law, and made their boast of God, but in works denied Him. This interpretation of the parable is indeed the most obvious and usual; and that given by Origen, St. Chrysostom, Athanasius, Jerome, and others, by a sort of universal consent. Origen mentions this as the reason why St. Matthew alone has recorded it, as writing to the Jews. And the case of course applies most strongly to the Jews generally,

whose very characteristic at this time consisted in a profession of serving God ;—which is intimated in all our Lord's appeals to them, and in those of the Baptist, and of St. Paul. This very description of them is adduced by our Lord Himself from the Prophet : "This people draw near Me with their mouths, and with their lips do honour Me ; but have removed their hearts far from Me." Or the parable might apply even more closely to express declarations of obedience they had made in former times, as when they said to Moses, "All the words which the Lord hath said, will we do." On the contrary, it may be observed, that the highest instances of acceptable faith were from among the Gentiles ; and those too characterized with a marked absence of all religious profession, as in the case of the Centurion, the Canaanitish woman, and Zaccheus. But the parable was perhaps designedly so spoken by our Blessed Lord, that this account of the calling of the Gentiles, though secretly implied, yet was not openly and fully stated. Origen supposes that the expression, "shall go before you," implies that the Gentiles shall precede, but that the Jews shall afterwards follow, into the kingdom ; that when "the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in, all Israel shall be saved."

Moreover, as every parable which is spoken of a whole class, or Church, or nation, is divinely intended to speak also with all the fulness of its meaning to individual Christians ; so this would no doubt be rightly received in its usual acceptation, as applying to those who make great professions of religion, and even resolutions and designs, but in practice fall far short ; while others, who make no such display of religion, do afterwards keep its laws far better. Even Origen thus explains this parable : "One may see," he says, "after repentance some making advances

to something better, and taking care to improve themselves beyond former expectation ; but others, who had been eagerly promising much, acting contrary to their promises¹." In this indeed, and in all the other interpretations of which it is capable, it seems a setting forth of that principle more than once put forward by our Lord, and in many and manifold ways mysteriously fulfilled, that "the last shall be first and the first last."

Again, some would suppose that the parable is not concerning Gentiles and Jews, but simply of sinners and just men ; of whom the former, having denied God by their works, by repentance received the Baptism of John ; the other, boasting of the Law, performed not its precepts, but despised John's baptism of repentance. And certainly in the Gospel "sinners" and "just men" are often used as equivalent to publicans and Pharisees. In the same kind of general way "the publicans and harlots" have been supposed to represent men and women, and the vices to which they are respectively most liable, covetousness or lust, or perhaps more properly the busy and careful, or the indolent and self-indulgent life, which are thus recovered by repentance. But the fact is, that the parable, although it might first have applied to one case, yet as that case involves a general principle, it will apply with equal force to all developments of the same principle, as exemplified in other cases.

In whatever way we interpret the parable, the figurative parts of it will, of course, bear a similar and analogous interpretation. The Father is God, who wishes to be served and loved as a Father. The command is not by word of mouth as by man, nor in person, but by the voice of God, the "still small voice" speaking to the heart and

¹ In Matt. tom. xvii. 5.

spirit, to the Gentile by the natural conscience secretly instilling understanding into the senses, and suggesting His will; to the Jew by His Law and His Prophets. And the answer too in both cases is the answer to Almighty God; not, therefore, a reply by word of mouth, but, as man speaks to God, by the movement and inclination of the heart; the refusal "we will not" is, by relinquishing God and turning to idols; by not keeping even the law of nature by which God spoke to them, in the case of the Gentiles; and in the case of the Jew by not keeping the written Law, as our Lord so often said of them, "yet none of you keepeth the Law;" for the Law would otherwise have brought them to Christ. In the same manner it is obvious, that working in the "vineyard" implies the works of holiness and repentance: and the "day," both here and in many other places, the time of this mortal life,—our "day" of probation, after which "the night cometh, when no man can work." Thus in the parable of the labourers sent into the vineyard, it is for "a day;" and alluding to the same, "all the day long have I stretched forth My hands,"—all the day of trial to each individual, all the day of this world to mankind; of which it is said, "to-day if ye will hear His voice," and "to-day is the day of salvation." Thus also the expression that John came "in the way of righteousness" may bear its application to us all, not merely that he came in the way of legal observances, but that he came to call us to Christ, Who is "our righteousness," that righteousness which justifies, and the true fulfilment of the Law. For He came "to fulfil all righteousness," and in those that are His, He does still fulfil the same. The whole parable in this latter interpretation is to the effect of what St. James says, that it is "not the hearing, but the doing of

the word," that will profit us; and St. Paul, that "not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified;" where he is setting forth this very distinction between Jews and Gentiles, as implying two states, one of profession and the other of obedience. And indeed the parable in this sense is no less than the inculcation of the great principle,—as the very foundation of all things in the Christian Church, and the first thing in religion and morals,—that it is obedience only that can bring us to the perception of Divine Truth, and not mere external knowledge.

SECTION III

THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD

THUS did our Lord instruct and reprove the Pharisees, with words that should afford instruction to the humblest Christian, yet containing deep and hidden wisdom, which Angels themselves may love to look into. And now that He had shown, to such as were willing to learn, His divinely commissioned authority, and many must have recognized the truth of the description, His commission being, as it were, the door to His Temple, the opening of His doctrine, He proceeds at greater length to set forth a parable, addressed to the assembled people and Pharisees together, by which He unfolds the events that were approaching—and shows to what awful lengths they were proceeding who had rejected the Baptist—Who He Himself was—and who and what the Jews were. But in the same way that an individual is best shown to himself by

a retrospect of his past life ; so on more than one occasion the former history of the Jews is taken as the mirror in which they are shown to themselves ; as in the speech of St. Stephen. Our Lord does so now, but veils the description by the parable, which, interesting and engaging their attention, prevents their seeing its application to themselves, until they have formed an unbiassed judgment of the case. The figure itself is the one by which He had often spoken to them in His Prophets and Psalms ; and in all its circumstances taken from the Prophet Isaiah. Thus does He not only adduce and explain the testimony of that Prophet, but also further carries out his meaning ; for the Prophet himself has in that description already supplied all the drift and force, until our Lord draws it out and applies it home, by the mention of Himself, and the result of their intentions towards Him. It is the same Spirit speaking by the same figure, and to the same purport : for in both “the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant ; and He looked for judgment, but behold oppression.”

“*And He began to speak to them in parables,*” says St. Mark, perhaps alluding to the former, which St. Matthew records, and some others not mentioned : St. Luke, that “*He began to speak to the people*” (in distinction from the discourse that Evangelist previously mentioned with the Pharisees) “*this parable ;*” and St. Matthew, that He proceeded by saying, “*Hear ye another parable. There was a certain*” (Matt., Luke) “*man*” (Matt., Mark, Luke) “*who was a householder, who*” (Matt.) “*planted a vineyard*” (Matt., Mark, Luke). As our Lord ever spoke of Himself as the Son of Man, by the like condescension does He often in the parables speak of God in His dealings to mankind as “a man ;” in the prophets ever appealing

as with the feelings of a man, as a Father and a Husband ; for as the Son of Man does He Himself appear to save, and as the Son of Man to judge mankind. And here it is to be noticed, that in the former parable it is "a man who had two sons," the Gentile and the Jew. But now "the man" is "a householder," having by Moses "built Him an house"—"the house of Israel," which "is the vineyard of the Lord." But in the third parable, "the man" is "a King," having established His Christian Kingdom ; and, therefore, in that parable He exerts higher authority than before ; He sends forth his armies to destroy, and He commands hand and foot to be bound.

We may reasonably suppose that there is contained some great mystery in those expressions, throughout the whole of the Old Testament, in which God is pleased to speak of Himself, not only under the figures of human bodily action, as of turning away His face, of sitting down, rising up, and walking, but also in terms of human passion and feeling, as of repentance and jealousy, and anger and pity. It is true, indeed, that all this is out of merciful condescension to our infirmities : like a Father, says Origen, who speaks to his infant son in a childlike manner, descending to the words of a child, in order to withhold him. But may it not also have some mysterious connexion with the doctrine of the Incarnation, for all great doctrine in Scripture is found to pervade every part of it ? May it not all be a part of the great dispensation, which is indicated by our Lord taking to Himself the name of "Son of Man" ? Origen has some remarkable observations on the whole subject¹, in speaking of the Parable of the King's son which ensues, and adds : "As long as we are men, and it is not expedient for us to behold the riches of that

¹ In Matt. tom. xvii. 19.

goodness which is hidden in God, lest we should be injured thereby, the Kingdom of Heaven hath of necessity been likened unto 'a man who was a King,' in order that as man He may speak to men, and thus deal with mankind in His dispensations, who are not capable of being dealt with by Him continuing in all things as God. And then shall the Kingdom of Heaven cease to be likened unto a man, when jealousy and contention, and all other passions shall have ceased, and we shall no longer walk as men; but shall be rendered by God, 'the children of the Most High.'" In like manner Origen proceeds to say, that there will be a time when He will no longer deal with us according to those similitudes, which He uses of Himself in the Prophets, as of His being like a leopard, or a lion, or a bear bereaved, in the prophet Hosea; and that He will no longer be as "a consuming fire," when all that is evil in us has been consumed. For now, although we may be rendered fit to behold God with our understanding and heart, yet we see Him not as He is, but as He becometh in this His dispensation towards us. But in that restoration of all things of which He hath spoken since the world began, we shall see Him, not as we now do, but as He really is.

Our Lord proceeds in the parable according to the very description of Isaiah, "*And He placed a fence around it, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower*" (Matt., Mark) for the wine-dresser to dwell in. And having thus marked it as the very same vineyard of which the Prophet spoke, He leaves the imagery of the Prophet, and shows that it is also the same vineyard of which He spake in the Parable of His hiring labourers into it. "*And He let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*for a long time*" (Luke). The hedge that

was thrown around His vineyard some, as Theophylact, would explain as the hedge of the Law, keeping them from the Gentiles ; some would explain it as Angelic guards ; others, with St. Hilary, as the custody of just men, which was like a wall around them, as the name of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; some, with Origen and Chrysostom, as the watchful care of God. But the latter interpretation may be supposed to include all others, for the care of God of course implies the protection of Saints and good Angels, as well as much more ; and the Psalmist, in complaining of God's having forsaken this Vine, says, "Thou hast broken down her hedges." In like manner, although ancient writers would explain differently the meaning of the "wine-press," yet all their interpretations come to intimate the same, viz. such things in the Jewish economy as contained within them significations of the Sacrifice of Christ. Thus Origen speaks of it as the place of Sacrifice ; another as the Altar ; another as the Word of God, which crucifies the old man, and to which the nature of flesh is opposed ; St. Irenæus and Hilary as the Prophets ; St. Ambrose as the Psalms, "in which are contained the mysteries of our Lord's Passion, and which are overflowing with the new wine of the Spirit." These words of St. Ambrose respecting the Psalms, as intended by the wine-press, might with equal propriety be applied to the other interpretations, of the Altar, the Prophets, and the like. Perhaps "the tower" may be explained, with Origen and Chrysostom, to signify the Temple, in which God dwelt among His people. But St. Hilary takes it as the Law, and beautifully adds, "which goeth forth from earth and advanceth to Heaven ; and from which, as from a watch-tower, the coming of Christ might be discerned." At all events, the "wine-press" is more

out of sight,—that which is beneath, to receive the blood of the sacrifice or the juice of the grape;—and such was the doctrine of Christ Crucified among the Jews: whereas the “watch-tower” was more manifest and in the sight of all, as the Temple at Jerusalem or the Law.

Origen explains the householder’s going into a far country, to be “when the Lord, who had been with them in a Cloud by day and a Pillar of Fire by night, until He had planted them and led them unto His holy mountain and His tabernacle, no longer thus appeared to them. And the time of the fruit drawing near was the period of the Prophets, who sought fruit of the husbandmen of the vineyard, that they might now show that having received the Law they had lived according to it.” St. Jerome says of this, the departure of the householder, that it is not to be understood “of change of place, for God cannot be absent from any place, as He filleth all things, but that He appeareth to depart from the vineyard, while He leaveth the husbandmen to their own free will².” And St. Ambrose, “Not that the Lord departed from place to place, Who is every where present, but because He is more present to those who love Him, absent from those who neglect Him.” But St. Chrysostom explains the “going into a far country” in a more general way, as implying the long-suffering of God in waiting for the fruits. Perhaps indeed the absence of the Lord and His going away may, on this and other occasions, be the description of Him who, being ever near and able to punish, yet bears long, and is as if He were away, leaving men to their own free will to choose that which is good. Our Lord we know, in like manner, in the probation of Christians, speaks of Himself as having gone away, and His absence

² In Luc. lib. ix.

as appearing long to the slothful servant, who says, "my Lord delayeth His coming;"—not considering that "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, but is long-suffering to usward." Which implies that His absence is, as it were, long-suffering. In like manner in the Gospels³, our Lord's retiring from the unbelieving Jews, and holding aloof from them, is mentioned as an instance of His long-suffering: and His not fully disclosing the presence of His Divine Power, which was in fact similar to withdrawing Himself from them, was an indication of the same tenderness and forbearance towards them.

And here the Parable in the Evangelists becomes different from that in the Prophet, for in Isaiah it is the Vine which is blamed, but in this the Husbandmen. The complaint in Isaiah is, after the description of all that had been done for the Vine, "wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" But this is, "*And in the season*" (Mark, Luke) "*when the season of fruits drew near*" (Matt.), "*He sent to the husbandmen*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*His servants*" (Matt.); but perhaps more particularly "*a servant*" (Mark, Luke), "*to receive*" (Matt.), or "*that He might receive from the husbandmen*" (Mark), "*that they might give him*" (Luke) "*of the fruit of the vineyard*" (Mark, Luke), "*its fruits*" (Matt.). "*But they*" (Mark) "*the husbandmen*" (Matt., Luke) "*having seized*" (Matt., Mark) "*His servants*" (Matt.), "*beat him, and sent him away empty*" (Mark, Luke), "*beat one, and killed one, and stoned another. Again, He sent other servants more than the first; and they did unto them likewise*" (Matt.). "*He proceeded to send*" (Luke), "*and again sent unto them*" (Mark), "*another servant; and him*" (Mark, Luke) "*they stoned and struck*"

³ See Ministry 2nd Year, p. 47.

on the head" (Mark), "*beat him and dishonoured him*" (Luke), "*and sent him away*" (Mark, Luke) "*dishonoured*" (Mark) "*and empty. And He proceeded further to send a third, and they wounded him also and cast him out*" (Luke). Or as St. Mark says, "*And again He sent another ; and him they slew, and many others, beating some and slaying others.*" It would appear as if on the whole there were three missions, that are here spoken of, as St. Luke records it, however the Gospels may be variously arranged. It is not clear what these three missions apply to. Some would consider them as the three dispensations which speak of our Lord, and to which our Lord refers under the name of "the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms," which wrote concerning Him. However this may be, these three missions perfectly harmonize with what was said before, of the instances of God's calling three times. It seems uncertain who the persons were who are described in the parable as thus maltreated, and probably many of them are not known even by name, but were servants of God and prophets, sent to them from time to time ; and who being at first sent few in number and at intervals, as Moses, and then the Judges, were afterwards sent more frequently. "Sending more than the former," says St. Hilary ⁴, "designates that time when, after the preaching of single persons, there were sent forth a great many at the same time who prophesied." That many were thus ill-used appears from more than one of our Lord's discourses, and also from the statement of St. Stephen, and from the Epistle to the Hebrews. Nor is there any thing more remarkable in the history of mankind, than the fate which good men have met with at all times, as Socrates did among the Greeks. And this parable explains the cause of such ill-treatment,—it is because

⁴ In Matt. xxii.

good men, like messengers of God, seem to demand of them good fruits, which they have not to give. Such effects would be more strongly developed among a nation to which the Prophets of God came ; and thus the envy of goodness, which commenced with the blood of righteous Abel, was now on the point of reaching its consummation in the blood of Christ. Even in the days of Isaiah were their "hands full of blood." And St. Ambrose beautifully says of this parable, in allusion to the interpretation of the wine-press : "The wine-press was not filled with the wine of gladness, the new wine of the Spirit, but the wine vats were overflowing with the blood of the prophets ⁵." But the more their violence increased the more did God's loving-kindness : through each successive step in wickedness was applied the mercy of God, and with each successive step of God's mercy the wickedness of the Jews increased. Both were indeed contending with each other, as if in a struggle which should have the mastery, and both were now about to reach the fulness of their consummation ; for to this they added the blood of His only Son ; but the goodness of God here surpassed the wickedness of mankind, and prevailed. The blood of His only Son, which they shed, He gave to be the eternal life of their souls, and converted for them into the new wine of the Spirit. So deep and unfathomable is the sea of His goodness.

For after all these things, when His servants had been thus treated, "*The Lord of the vineyard said, What shall I do ?*" (Luke.) "*Having, therefore, yet one Son, His well-beloved*" (Mark), "*He said, I will send them My Son, My well-beloved ; perhaps they will reverence Him when they see Him*" (Luke) : when they see Him, the brightness of His Father's glory, the express image of His person,

⁵ In Luc. lib. ix.

the perfection of all goodness and truth. "*Afterwards*" (Matt.) therefore, and "*last of all*" (Mark) "*He sent (Him*" Mark) "*unto them*" (Matt., Mark) "*His Son*" (Matt.), "*saying, They will reverence My Son*" (Matt., Mark). Thus did the Almighty Father please to express Himself in the wonderful condescension of human language as "*hoping against hope*;" and though He knew that such reverence was far from them, yet did He deliver up from His bosom His Well-beloved into their merciless hands; as if still looking for other treatment from them. And thus, oftentimes, does He express Himself by His Prophets as still looking for good and expecting it, but not finding: "For He said, Surely they are My people, children that will not lie. . . . But they rebelled and vexed His Holy Spirit⁶." When God is represented as thus speaking, "*They will reverence My Son*," it is of course in the same manner in which He is said to be angry and to repent, that is to say, that such feelings are attributed to Him, which in man account for such and such actions. This is of course all implied in this, that the parable is spoken of "*a certain man*." But yet, notwithstanding, these words, "*They will reverence My Son*," though He knew what would follow, are not said lightly, and after the manner of men, but seem to contain within them a description of all God's dealings with mankind—for even where He knows their wickedness and final impenitence, yet He mysteriously acts towards them as having hope, and as if still saying of them, "*They will reverence My Son*." For if the words which are here used contain any apparent contradiction to the foreknowledge of God, it is precisely the same which pervades all His dealings with mankind. And it has been well observed, that "God is always said to

⁶ Isa. lxiii. 8. 10.

doubt, in order that free-will may be reserved to man." St. Chrysostom's explanation is not altogether at variance with this, where he explains it as signifying what they ought to do—what might be reasonably expected of them—that they should reverence His Son. And thus Theophylact. But still, at the same time, the words of God, though spoken in condescension to human infirmities, yet are in themselves divinely true, and have, as it were, in themselves an inherent power to cause and make true what they declare. For doubtless, as the Father hath said, they shall reverence His Son, and all the more for their ill-usage of Him; for therefore hath God very highly exalted Him, and "to Him every knee shall bow." "They shall reverence Him when they see Him," and "every eye shall see Him," as the Glory of God manifested. What Origen says is in accordance with this, viz. that "they will reverence" is spoken of those Jews who believed in Christ.

"*But (those,*" Mark) "*the husbandmen*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*when they saw Him*" (Luke), "*when they saw the Son*" (Matt.)—when they saw Him, the one and only Son, beloved of God, and precious and dear in His sight, but set at nought and despised of man—"they reasoned, and" (Luke) "*said among themselves, This is the Heir; come let us kill Him*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). It would appear from these words that the Jews were somehow aware of what they were doing in putting Christ to death; and yet many things would seem to indicate that they were not. Thus St. Peter says, "now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it:" and St. Paul, that they knew it not, or "they would not have crucified the Lord of Life:" and our Lord's prayer for them was, that they might be forgiven, because they knew not what they did. Add to which, some sort of

ignorance is frequently ascribed to them; in our Lord's appeals to them, and the expressions of the Evangelists, it is constantly attributed to a judicial blindness—that God had “closed their eyes, so that they could not discern;” it is often said that “they could not believe;” and our Lord says to them, “Ye neither know Me nor My Father.” How, therefore, can they be described as saying, “This is the Heir; come let us kill Him”? The difficulty does, doubtless, as is always the case with such difficulties, contain within it a great truth; it is certain, from Scripture, that all wicked persons are in a state of darkness, and lose the power of seeing “the things which belong unto their peace.” They become utterly incapable of discerning God, when manifested before them; and therefore it is evident that in one sense they knew not what they did, they were in ignorance. This at first sight appears to be opposed to the declaration, “This is the Heir; come let us kill Him.” But on the other hand there are many other expressions in perfect accordance with the saying here attributed to them; thus, for instance, our Lord said unto them, “If ye were blind ye should have no sin;” and therefore, of course, in some sense, they did see and know what they were about. It is probably the same case with the enemies of Christ in all ages: they lose all true and real knowledge, which alone is worthy of the name of knowledge; they know not what they are doing, in that they have no sense of the nature and consequences of their crimes, as in this case they knew not that they were crucifying the Lord of Life; they knew not that they were laying hands on the Almighty Son of God, who is over all, blessed for evermore. This will explain two apparently opposite declarations of our Lord, for in this

sense our Lord said unto them, "Ye neither know Me nor My Father." But, again, on the other hand, as they had that knowledge, without which their actions would not have been sinful, He says unto them, "Ye know Me, and ye know whence I am." For indeed they knew that He was sent of God, that He was the Christ, the Heir of the kingdom; this His works and words prove so fully, that they will judge those who believe not. "Herein is a marvellous thing," said the man who had been blind, "that ye know not from whence He is, and yet He hath opened mine eyes." Thus King Herod, who made the first attempt on His life, did it as believing Him to be the Messiah, that He might take His kingdom; he wished to hear of Him that he might "come and worship Him." And Caiaphas urged His death as a matter of expediency to save themselves from the Romans, when it was granted that He did many miracles, and that, otherwise, all would believe on Him. Herod Antipas wished "to see some miracle done by Him," thereby acknowledging that he knew Him, when he set him at nought. And it was notorious to Pilate that the chief priests were actuated by envy. Add to which, our Lord's miracles exasperated them, and His Divine teaching also. They had, therefore, that degree of knowledge which most men have when bent on crimes, yet putting half-deceits on themselves, that they might not look in the face the full truth and all they knew.

Thus it was that, for their own ends, they made Him an outcast and excommunicate;—"And having seized Him" (Matt., Mark), "*they cast Him out of the vineyard, and slew Him,*" as St. Matthew and St. Luke say; or as St. Mark, "*they slew Him, and cast Him out of the vineyard;*" they excommunicated Him and condemned

Him to death; or they gave Him into the hands of heathens as one reprobate, and slew Him "without the city." Thus fulfilling the prophetic type to which St. Paul alludes, of His suffering "without the gate," . . . that "He might sanctify the people with His own blood." Thus St. Hilary speaks of it, "that Christ was cast without Jerusalem, that is, without the vineyard, into His sentence of condemnation." But Theophylact more generally, that as not Jerusalem, but the people, are called the vineyard in the parable, so as suffering not by their own hands, but by the hands of the Gentiles, He is said to be cast without the vineyard. And Origen⁷ explains it, that "as far as in them lay, by their condemning Him as guilty of death, they adjudged Him to be an alien, both to the vineyard and to the husbandmen."

"What therefore shall the Lord of the vineyard do?" (Mark, Luke) "to them?" (Luke.) "When therefore the Lord of the vineyard shall have come, what shall He do to those husbandmen? They," as was usual in our Lord's parables, not at first seeing the full application of it to themselves, they "say unto Him, He will miserably destroy those wretched men, and give up the vineyard to other husbandmen, who will render unto Him the fruits in their season" (Matt.). Thus did they, like Caiaphas, prophesy, knowing not the full meaning of their own words; for "the vineyard," the Scriptures, the Law and the Prophets, will be given to others. Nor is any thing added concerning these "other husbandmen" of the complaint which had been made in Isaiah, that it "brought forth wild grapes," but, on the contrary, it is said that it "shall bring forth fruit in due season;" because therein shall be planted the Living Vine, which

⁷ In Matt. tom. xvii. 11.

shall bear fruit pleasing unto God. "He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root; Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit⁸." It is of this Christian vine which fails not, the Church against which the gates of Hell shall not prevail, that it is said in the same place, "In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day."

And now there occurs a remarkable discrepancy between this account in St. Matthew and those in the other two Evangelists; but like all such discrepancies in Holy Scripture, when considered together, they tend mutually to throw light on each other, and afford us either some great doctrine, or a more lively representation of the occurrence. For St. Matthew tells us that the Jews themselves made this inference, and used these expressions; the other two inform us that our Lord Himself did so; and so far from their acquiescence, St. Luke tells us that they in strong language deprecated the inference. We may conclude that they are both equally correct, and it may be thus easily explained. It would appear from the other Evangelists as if our Lord took up their words, which were as St. Matthew records them, and repeated them with solemn emphasis and Divine denunciation; by which the whole force of the parable came forth to view, as speaking of themselves; and they stood condemned out of their own mouth, and then put it from them. He said, "*He shall come*" (Mark, Luke), to their expressions adding in awful words these of His own coming,—"*He shall come!*" that is to say, the Lord of the vineyard Himself, because, as St. Ambrose observes, "the Majesty

⁸ Isa. xxvii. 6.

of the Father also shall be present in the Son." Yes, He shall come "*and shall,*" as you say, "*destroy those husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others*" (Mark, Luke). "To others," that is to the Apostles, says Theophylact; to the Priests of the New Testament, says Cyril; or, as another writer says,—to all those who shall come from the east and the west, from the north and from the south, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of God. "*And they when they heard it,*" seeing now the full application of the parable to themselves, "*said, God forbid!*" (Luke.) But it is to be observed that our Lord, in taking up their words from their own mouths (if it is so to be explained), does not repeat the latter part, that they to whom He shall give the vineyard will give unto Him its fruits in their due season. And, from this silence of our Lord on this point, we might have inferred some mysterious allusion to the Christian Church, as failing like the Jewish, so that at Christ's next coming He shall scarce "find faith upon earth." But it is not so, for St. Matthew himself represents our Lord afterwards as repeating the latter part of the statement, and with much additional force: for after pressing upon them the former point by the application of the Scriptures, and by turning their attention to "the stone which the builders refused," our Lord adds this reference to the former parable, that "The kingdom of God" should be "given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

The discrepancy between St. Matthew and the other two Evangelists may be easily reconciled, by thus harmonizing them; and St. Chrysostom seems to suggest this mode of understanding it. But others would suppose that the Pharisees who made the admission in St.

Matthew, were not the same as those who deprecate it in St. Luke, when stated by our Lord ; but that some persons present, perhaps the disciples, make the admission, while the Pharisees deprecated our Lord's words. Something of this kind seems to be St. Augustin's mode of understanding it. Nor would this be at variance with our own explanation above ; of some making the acknowledgment, and our Lord taking up their words. But why should we not suppose them the same persons, and that thus, like David, by the parable of Nathan, they are made to condemn themselves out of their own mouth, and to acknowledge the justice of the Gentiles being called, and the vineyard being given to others ?

But as other parables, which are spoken of Israel, apply to the Christians, this also may be fulfilled in the human soul. The vineyard of the Lord, in which He has planted the choicest vine, which is Christ, at Baptism ; and hedged it around by His holy Law, or with the guard of angels, and looked for the fruits of the Spirit, and built a tower, the conscience of man, in which the heavenly Watcher might dwell ; or that "Peace of God, passing all understanding," which is said to "keep guard" and watch "over the heart." Thus He sends to it His servants, first the Holy Scriptures, and then His ministers, and afterwards His own Son, in the season of fruit, and the times of our visitation ; but when our evil and rebellious thoughts rise against Him, "they crucify to themselves afresh the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame." Or, as Quesnel explains it, "the vineyard is the soul of man ; the hedge is the commandments of God ; the wine-press is the blood of Christ ; the tower is His Church ; the first servants are the inspirations of His Spirit ; the second, the Scrip-

tures ; the third, His ministers ; and then Christ comes Himself in the holy Eucharist." However this may be, we know that the fruit of the vine is always, in Scripture, obedience ; and it is evident what the Lord of the vineyard will do to those who "crucify afresh" the Lord of life. As the inheritance was taken from Esau, and given to Jacob ; as it was taken from Israel after the flesh, and given to Israel after the Spirit ; as the talent was taken from the unprofitable servant, and given to him that had laboured ; so will the eternal inheritance be taken from those, and given to others.

SECTION IV

THE STONE REJECTED OF THE BUILDERS

WHEN the Pharisees, caught in the parable, as in a net, put from them its application, saying, "God forbid !" our Lord, as His custom was always to argue with them out of the Scriptures, being, moreover, described as "He that hath the key of David," and therefore able to unlock the Psalms,—proceeds to teach them out of their own Scriptures, which they professed to know, but understood not. As in His dealings with us, and the visitations of His providence, He comes to us at one hour in one form of visitation, and at the next in manifestations of a very different nature ; so He speaks of Himself in Holy Scripture under a variety of figures ; and He who was now the Vine, or the Heir of the vineyard, appears again under another figure, the Stone rejected. "*But He looked upon them*" (Luke), as if to bring conviction,

and to show that He was looking into their hearts, "*and said,*" in the presence of the multitude, "*What therefore is this that is written?*" (Luke), "*Have ye never read in the Scriptures?*" (Matt.) "*Have ye not read this Scripture?*" (Mark.) "*The Stone which the builders refused, the same hath become at the head of the corner*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). But our Lord, and His Holy Scriptures, refer all things to God Himself, as the Ruler of All, and He now adds, "*This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes*" (Matt., Mark).

If the parable before had entangled them in the truth, which they were unwilling to receive, now doubly were they enveloped in the meshes of the Holy Scriptures. The Word of God, as a mirror in which they were themselves portrayed, showed to the people that they, the masters in Israel, the builders themselves of the spiritual House of God, were to reject Him; but that, notwithstanding their rejection, He was to be made, by some marvellous and mysterious dispensation of God, the Head of the corner. As this stone was perhaps something remarkable that had occurred in the building of the second temple, so was He to become the Head and Corner-stone of a new temple, in which both Jews and Gentiles would be united to form one spiritual house of God; and this Stone would be the object of admiration in the eyes of all men, like a standing miracle and marvel unto the end of the world;—or "to all," says Origen, "who are able to behold it." Then does our Lord proceed to apply this Scripture to the very point which He had before prophetically declared: "*On this account I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof*" (Matt.). The kingdom of God, the oracles of God,

have been taken from the Jews and given to Christians. Nor does our Lord leave it here to their mere idle gaze and curiosity, that so wonderful a Scripture was about to be fulfilled; but goes on to show them the very dreadful consequences of their conduct, in words to be remembered both by Pharisees who would not hear, and by people who were disposed to attend. To do this more effectually, He takes up that very figure from the Scriptures, of the Stone, to show that not by accident is this figure applicable to Himself, but that He is the very "stone" of which Daniel spoke, that should break in pieces the kingdoms of the world; "the rock" of refuge which the Psalms had so often mentioned. "*And he (every one,*" Luke) "*that falleth on this (that,*" Luke) "*stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder*" (Matt., Luke). If Christ crucified is to any one "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence;" if the humility and holiness of the Christian religion occasion any one to fall, i.e. to stumble and to fall upon this stone, which is Christ crucified, it will be to his great detriment. The rejection of Christ will be to his extreme injury, even in this present time, when He is not come to condemnation and judgment. Or it may be in a good sense that the sinner who comes to Christ will become broken and contrite in spirit, will not be proud and elated, as one lifted up in this present world, but a penitent that mourns, and is lowly in spirit, and meek. St. Jerome's interpretation will fall in with this, who takes it that, "he who is a sinner and yet believes in Him, falls indeed on this stone and is broken; but is not altogether crushed, for he is preserved through patience unto salvation." But in whichever way the first point is explained, the second part is clear, that on whomsoever

He shall come in judgment (as on the guilty Jerusalem, in type of His final coming), it will utterly destroy him. Nothing else can utterly destroy, but Christ coming in judgment, for in every other visitation there is hope. They may be broken, but not crushed. In two senses, therefore, is our Lord's declaration fulfilled; first of all, with regard to the Jews, it is the condemnation of their souls in their being offended in Christ, as Theophylact says; and thus by falling on this stone, they become powerless and broken from that day,—so broken that, as St. Augustin says, they cannot walk upright. But afterwards it shall fall upon them so as utterly to destroy their city, so that “there shall not be found a sherd to take fire from the hearth;”—shall reduce them to powder, and scatter them as dust over the face of the whole earth;—like the dust before the wind, and “the angel of the Lord scattering them.” Something in this manner is it taken by Chrysostom, Augustin¹, and Theophylact; and indeed some translate the word, He shall “winnow” them, i.e. as chaff before the wind. Thus also is it spiritually fulfilled, that all they to whom the Cross is an offence are broken, and have no moral or spiritual strength to walk uprightly; but at the last it shall fall upon them and grind them to powder. Thus Quesnel says, “The punishment of sinners is terrible even in this world; but it is without remedy in the other².” But, moreover, with respect to the figure which our Lord here interprets of Himself, it may be that that which is fulfilled in Christ, is fulfilled also in His elect: he who falls on a good Christian by persecution or ill will is broken thereby, but cannot hurt him whose trust is in God; for he is as the stone, firm and constant, rejected indeed of men,

¹ Quæst. Ev. i. 30.

² On St. Luke.

but built up by God Himself into His own living temple.

"He is called a stone," says Eusebius, "as having a body of earth: and cut out without hands, according to the vision of Daniel, as being born of a virgin. He is not of silver or of gold, inasmuch as He was not a glorious king, but a man humble and despised." And indeed by comparing things spiritual with spiritual, a good man might have discerned in this figure many attributes of the Messiah. He was disallowed of the builders of Israel, as the Psalmist says, for Christ "was despised and rejected of men;" but He has become the Head of the corner, combining together in one the old and the new covenant, and the Gentiles and the Jews, as walls of the spiritual temple. "He shall be for a sanctuary," says Isaiah³, "for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel. And many among them shall stumble and fall, and be broken, and be snared and be taken." "He is," says the same Prophet, "a stone, a tried stone⁴," for He was "tempted in all things, like as we are, yet without sin." He is "a precious stone⁵," says Isaiah, for "to the elect" (writes St. Peter) "He is precious." He is "a sure foundation," adds the same Prophet: for "other foundation" (says St. Paul) "can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus." This stone is also the Holy Spirit of God: for, as we read in the Revelation⁶, that the Lamb had "seven eyes," so is it said of Him in Zechariah, "upon one stone shall be seven eyes⁷." Again, as Christ is sometimes put for the Church, so the stone that is cut out from the mountain shall fill the whole earth. As the

³ Isa. viii. 14, 15.

⁴ Isa. xxviii. 16.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Rev. v. 6.

⁷ Zech. iii. 9.

name of Christ is sometimes applied to the Spirit within the Church, Which is its Light, so it is said of the holy Jerusalem, "her light was like unto a stone most precious." And as Christ is sometimes said to be in His members, and one with them, so the Christian also is called a "living stone;" and as Christ is the Life and Resurrection of the true believer, so it is said, "I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it⁸."

Thus the deputation from the Pharisees, in the presence of the multitude, to demand His authority, was the very means to put forward before those people themselves, in the strongest manner, our Lord's Divine Person and authority, and the nature of His kingdom; and affords an opportunity of solemnly warning and reproving them in the presence of that people. This is ever the case as a law of Christ's kingdom, that under worldly persecution the power of God therein becomes most manifested; and His purposes in the Christian Church are furthered thereby, and promoted; for His enemies also are but conferring to His honour, and carrying on the purposes of His goodness. The striking and impressive character of these parables is evident from what follows: "*And the Chief Priests and the Pharisees, when they heard His parables, perceived that He spake concerning them*" (Matt.), alluding to the two that St. Matthew had recorded; and perhaps more particularly the last, for St. Mark and St. Luke speak of that. "*For they perceived that He had spoken the (this,*" Luke) "*parable with reference to them*" (Mark, Luke), "*and they sought to take Him*" (Matt., Mark). "*The Chief Priests and Scribes thought to have laid hands on Him in that very hour*"

⁸ Rev. xxi. 11; ii. 17.

(Luke); "*but they feared the people*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*since they held Him as a Prophet*" (Matt.). So exasperated were they; and strange as it may appear, this is ever the difference between good and bad men: as it has been well observed, the good man, when detected in sin, grieves because he has sinned; a bad man, because he is detected; and, instead of repenting, is angry with him that discovers it. But the words themselves are to faith full of thoughts for mysterious wonder and adoration; they sought to lay violent hands on Him Who was the very image of God, the Only-begotten and Beloved of the Father, He Who made and sustaineth all things by the word of His mouth! Yet very wonderful as it is in itself, it is but the description of His dealings with mankind at all times; He is ever among them, "even as a man that hath no strength⁹." And if He restrains the hands of His enemies when they are on the point of doing violence to His Church, or Himself in His members, He restrains them, not by manifestation of His power, but by some very slight and worldly causes, such as this, because they fear the multitude of His followers, who hold Him as a Prophet. It is so in the present day, unworthy as His followers are, and unworthy as their thoughts are of Him, taking Him indeed for a Prophet, but with very little adequate sense of His power and goodness, like the multitude around Him in the temple; yet from fear of these His followers, His Church is not openly assailed. He, the faithful witness, sits therein, and still continues to condemn the world, and is hated by it, but not destroyed. Still by these restraints, such as the fear of men, He mercifully holds the hands of the wicked, until, if their hearts are not amended, He leaves them to themselves.

⁹ See *Passion*, pp. 84, 85.

SECTION V

PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE FEAST

“*And*” now the Pharisees “*left Him and departed*” (Mark), being desirous but afraid to take Him, having shown how truly it had been said of them of old, “They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders’ poison is under their lips;” as being themselves the children of the old serpent. To understand what follows, we must consider the circumstances,—the persons around,—our Lord Himself, and His usual mode of treating mankind. The audience were now of a different character; they consisted of His disciples, and the crowd, who were exceeding eager to hear Him, and whose presence and goodwill had saved Him from the hands of His enemies: He had Himself also manifested His superiority to the Scribes and His Divine authority. On such an occasion His followers would feel more than ever elated, and ready to adhere to Him, and many of them disposed to draw near to Him, in some degree calculating on peculiar favour and acceptance with Him. Now we find that our Lord, “knowing what was in man,” was in the habit of never trusting Himself to them; He acted in this respect in a manner quite unlike all human teachers, who are disposed to flatter and encourage their followers, especially when gathering around them, and causing enemies to retire. Whereas, whenever any great eagerness was shown to follow Him, He set before them awful and alarming warnings. Thus, on one occasion, when the people were flocking around Him, we

read, "There went great multitudes with Him, and He turned, and said unto them, If any man come to Me and hate not his father and mother yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" "for which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost?" Of the same kind was, His checking the Scribe, who professed himself ready to follow Him wheresoever He went: His warning to St. Peter when he spoke with great confidence; and many other instances. It was on an occasion when many believed on Him, that St. John added, "But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men." And when the parables were delivered to a vast concourse of people, by the side of the Lake, the first that occurs is of the same awfully searching character, that of the Sower; whereby the eager multitude were cautioned how they heard, it was one to try and awaken, not to flatter; as coming from One who read their hearts. It is agreeably to this that our Lord now sets before them a parable, in which, as they would discern the Pharisees, who being invited to the Feast, either despised it and departed, or seized the King's servants and slew them: so they would not fail to recognize themselves in the accepted guests, who were brought in of every kind from every quarter. And no sooner would they have thus recognized themselves, than their ears and hearts would be open to the important and striking part of the parable,—when the King made His entrance to the Feast, and all things were prepared. For as in the former instances with the Pharisees, when they acquiesced in our Lord's words till the application came to themselves: so the mixed multitude now who were listening to Him, and ready to support Him, would follow up the parable with their understandings open to receive it, till they came by

surprise on the inference, "Thou art the man." For the guest at the end of the parable who "had not on a wedding garment," would serve as a very awful appeal to them all, and each individually; warning them to take care how they themselves should receive Him, whether in sincerity or not. It is to be observed that the force of the parable depends on this very circumstance, as the chief drift and point of the whole, viz. on the entering in of the King at the close; whereas in the other parable of the Marriage Supper on another occasion, in St. Luke, in some respects similar to this, there is no mention of this point.

The fact of our Lord making use of a parable so similar to one He before used, is an instance among many others of His not only performing similar actions, and using similar expressions at different times, but also whole parables. It is, however, not only of itself in many points different, but the occasion which gives rise to it entirely so. For on the former occasion in St. Luke, the parable is introduced at a feast, when speaking of feasts, and on one observing, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God¹." But, in the present case, it has a more entire reference to the case of the Jews and the Gentiles: in the other, the description is more exact as applied to the times of the Gospel in general, and the establishment of the Kingdom. In St. Luke it is not a Marriage feast at all, nor is it by a King, but "A certain man made a great supper." The point and conclusion in St. Luke is the rejection of the Feast; that in St. Matthew is the unworthy Guest. That in St. Luke's terminates with the visible kingdom, and with the expression "Compel them to come in, that My house may be filled;" this carries on the same to the threshold of the invisible kingdom, when not only is the

¹ Luke xiv. 15.

“house filled,” but the King appears. According to this difference in the two parables it is used by the Church, which seems to make a distinction between the two, in that it brings forward that in St. Luke as a lesson of instruction prior and preparatory to the other; that in St. Luke is selected, as the Gospel for the day, among the earlier Sundays after Trinity; that in St. Matthew occurs considerably later. St. Gregory², indeed, takes the two parables differently to what we have done, and applies that in St. Luke to the Church invisible, and this to the visible Church: but he appears to have no strongly defined opinion, for he thinks they may both be the same parable. And of course the distinction between the Church visible and invisible is so little marked, so imperceptibly do they blend into each other, that what is said of one is usually said in some measure of the other also.

The parable in St. Luke may indeed have this supposed reference to the Church invisible; but still, as such, it seems but descriptive of what is now going on, or to the Church visible. In that parable of St. Luke we have excuses more explicitly stated, which are precisely such as our Lord gives us, in other places, in the account of these the latter days, and of the reception which His religion would meet with. These excuses in St. Matthew’s parable, proceed from the Jews before their city was destroyed; whereas in St. Luke they are rather those of all persons who reject the Gospel. The difference, in short, between the two parables is precisely the same which exists in the different uses of the term the Kingdom of Heaven; which applies sometimes chiefly and most clearly to the Church on earth, and sometimes to that which is to be hereafter;

² Hom. in Ev. xxxviii. 2.

but oftentimes to either or both at the same time, in such a manner as not to admit of a very definite distinction between the two senses.

But to return to the parable before us, and its wonderful and mysterious bearing on the things which were now going on. While we see the great propriety and suitability to the occasion, and the persons immediately addressed in this parable, we doubt not but that our Lord when He spoke, and when He had the words spoken recorded by His Evangelist, spoke also with higher applications to every age and nation. And we may observe how this parable rises out of and extends beyond the other parables, previously delivered on this occasion, into still higher and fuller mysteries of Christ's Kingdom, and deeper manifestations of God's wonderful mercy. For in the last parable, that of the Vineyard, He sent His servants again and again to be slain, and then His Son; and when He is likewise killed, then He sends forth to say that His dinner is prepared, that His choicest victims and fatlings are killed. And what is this but that "fatted calf" which the Father brings forth, when the Prodigal son or returning Gentile is received with such welcome? And this Victim is no less than His own Son, Whom they had slain. Instead of destroying them for their wickedness, He calls them to a feast, (to feed on His Son Whom they had killed!) but they refuse to come. Nor is this all, for they ill entreat and kill His servants. Not till then, till they have rejected and slain His Apostles also, does "the stone fall upon them," and destroy that guilty nation. But the crown and consummation of all these mercies is assigned to those who are now called without discrimination from "the high-ways," and are given to sit down at this Feast. Of them more is required; they are freely

called, and the election is of God,—but then the obedience expected is in proportion. “Obedience,” says St. Chrysostom, “is the marriage garment.”

“*And Jesus answered, and spake again to them in parables, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain man who was a King, which made a marriage for His Son*” (Matt.). For the Kingdom of Heaven was that which they were all now intensely expecting during these days, “that the Kingdom of God should immediately appear,” and for themselves to find a place in it: our Lord’s parable therefore is to explain its nature with respect to each individual, and the nature of his place in that kingdom. It is to be observed that our Lord does not merely say “a king,” which words alone would have been, humanly speaking, natural and sufficient, but “a man” who was “a king;” expressing as before the Almighty’s wonderful condescension, in assimilating Himself to our infirmities in His dispensations towards us. “It might have been written,” says Origen, “the kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a king,” without the addition of “a man;” but since this expression, “a man,” is attached to it, it is necessary to discuss this term.

And what was this Marriage, but that union of Christ with His Church, which had been ordained before the foundation of the world, and of which earthly marriage was made to be a type and figure; and which therefore is set forth throughout the whole of Scripture, from the second chapter in Genesis, wherein St. Paul says it is mysteriously spoken of, to the last chapter in the Revelation, when the Bride saith, “Even so come,” to the Bridegroom who seems to tarry. Not therefore as man would speak does our Blessed Saviour select this figure, but as setting forth the great antitype; for wherever love is amongst lost

mankind, it is but a faint shadow of that celestial love which holds together the Eternal Bridegroom and the Bride formed from His side; and wherever there is a festal meeting with rejoicing of friends, it is but an emblem of the spiritual joy of those, who shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven. For "then shall the kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth." "The Son of the King," says Origen, "in the Resurrection shall marry with a marriage that is beyond all marriage, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man. That awful and Divine and Spiritual marriage is among those unspeakable words which it is not lawful for man to utter³." But now in this present time is the inviting of the guests. Now is the Spirit sent, which is the earnest of the future inheritance, when mortality shall be swallowed up of life. "The marriage feast," says Gregory, "was made by the King the Father for the King the Son, when He joined to Him the holy Church in the mystery of His Incarnation." And St. Hilary⁴, that "the Father has already made this wedding, because this eternal union and espousal of the new Body is already perfect in Christ." And indeed the Feast was prepared before the guests were first invited—the Jews who refused to come—for the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world.

"And He sent His servants to call those that were bidden to the marriage." These first servants were perhaps the Twelve and the Seventy, who were sent forth during our Lord's lifetime. *"And they would not come. Again He sent forth other servants, saying, Tell those that are called, Behold I have prepared My dinner, My oxen and fatlings*

³ In Matt. tom. xviii. 33.

⁴ Can. in Matt. xxii.

are killed, and all things are ready; come to the marriage." And who could be these who were now sent, but the Apostles after the Crucifixion of Christ, when the Lamb of God in very deed was slain: not only in type and figure, and in the foreknowledge and purpose of God? Origen, however, speaks of the first servants who were sent as being Prophets, and those sent the second time as another collection of Prophets, and the dinner prepared being the nourishment supplied in the mysteries of God. Others would take the first bidding to be from the time of Abraham, to whom the Incarnation was already promised: others, that the servant first sent was Moses (if we read servant in the singular number), or the Prophets (if we read servants in the plural, for there are both readings); and those next sent, the Apostles. St. Hilary says that they were "bidden" to the marriage, or prepared, by Prophets beforehand; and "called" by the servants who were sent out, viz. the Apostles.

Here it may be observed, that there is no rejoicing in Holy Scripture without a sacrifice and a feast; no receiving of the prodigal son, without the slaying of the fatted calf. We know that these figures are applied to the Gospel generally, yet is it more especially to the great Sacrament of the Eucharist of which the Prophet Isaiah says, "A feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow⁵;" for such is indeed the very marrow of the Gospel itself. And as the participation of Christ at the Holy Communion is mysteriously connected with the Resurrection of the body⁶, it may be that there is some secret allusion to that in this parable, for this Feast refers to the Resurrection and the day of Judgment. But it is remarkable that whatever deep and mysterious

⁵ Isa. xxv. 6.

⁶ See Ministry, 2nd Year, P. iii. § xii.

things are contained in Holy Scripture, they are, by a wonderful Providence, made available to the most simple devout Christian; and this is the case with these two parables; for although their connexion with the Sacrament is a deep and hidden thing, proved by him who is "instructed unto the kingdom," by bringing "out of his treasures things new and old," by numberless analogies and expressions, and circumstances that look before and after, yet the reference to the Holy Eucharist is so obvious, that the most illiterate do ever naturally apply it to the same. This may be said also of our Lord's heavenly discourse respecting it in the sixth chapter of St. John, so sublime and deep, that the wisest cannot fathom its profound and unsearchable mysteries; and yet so obvious in its application to the Eucharist, that the most simple naturally so apply it. In so doing, these "babes" in Christ are wiser than the Scribes and disputers of this world, such enter into and enjoy the kingdom of God's mysteries, while "the wise and prudent" are cavilling at the door. So wonderful is the power of adaptation which resides in the Divine Word.

"But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his merchandize; and the rest having laid hands on His servants, spitefully entreated them, and slew them. But when the King heard of it, He was angry; and sent forth His armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." Here we have evidently at once the city of Jerusalem spoken of, when "the wrath" had "come upon them to the uttermost"; when they had either neglected and despised, as in the first instance, or had persecuted the religion of Christ. It has been well observed, that "when He was inviting to the

marriage, and doing works of mercy, the name of 'Man' was added to that of King;" but now when He comes to vengeance, the man is passed over in silence, and He is called "the King" only. But what are these armies of the King? Some would interpret them as the Roman armies⁸, with an obvious propriety; but Origen, as "the multitude of the Heavenly host, or those Angels that are appointed to execute punishment⁹." And this seems a higher and better interpretation, for these hosts of God would include both war, and famine, and pestilence, those His three scourges which were seen so signally in the destruction of Jerusalem.

"Then saith He to His servants, The marriage is ready."

The marriage is ready; every thing now that can be done for man is "finished," there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. *"But they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye therefore unto the by-ways, and as many as ye shall find, call to the marriage. And those servants went out."*

The servants went out; that is, says Origen, the Apostles went forth from Judea and Jerusalem; or else that the angels went forth from that inner place, where the blessed angels were. They went *"into the ways, and collected all as many as they found, both bad and good. And the marriage was filled with guests reclining"* at the table. Go ye into the by-ways of the Gentiles, to men of all kinds and of all modes of life, ways proceeding in every direction, which circumstance was signified by the expression of publicans and sinners and harlots. The calling is not of works, but of the free grace and gift of God. This evidently implies the period, from the destruction of Jerusalem to the end of the world; the servants are the Apostles and Ministers who are sent forth; and all this

⁸ As Ludolph.

⁹ In Matt. xvii. 13.,

time is nothing else but the calling in of the guests, for as soon as the Gospel has been proclaimed to all the world, the end will come. These are from the by-ways, in distinction from that great and Royal way of Israel, spoken of by the Prophet, which was prepared for the coming of the King, by making the crooked places straight, and the rough ways plain, by raising the valleys and laying low the mountains. And these who are now called are "both bad and good." It may be that the promiscuous multitude of the Gentiles is thus spoken of in distinction from the chosen seed ; or rather Jews and Gentiles alike, the clean and unclean animals together, by the instinctive calling of God, flocking into the Ark, or Church visible. Or it may be that at our Saviour's own teaching none would enter the Gospel, but those who would take up their Cross and forsake all that they had ; and in the time of His Apostles, the Church was comparatively pure when tried by persecution, the manifestation of Christ was in such a manner, that none but the good could see and understand. But since it has been filled with both bad and good, they have been "compelled to come in," whether "willing or not ;" "the net has gathered of every kind." Yet again, in another sense, the fulfilment of the whole parable is still going on, and the description is being throughout again fulfilled, as the calling of God to those who are in the visible Church to enter into the invisible. The invitation is going on still, even to the Christian world—an invitation to good things—for it is not an invitation to hardships and difficulties, but to a "feast of fat things." As the Israelites were summoned from Egyptian bondage, to "hold a feast unto the Lord." The invitation is still, as it ever was, "Come unto Me all ye that are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." "If any one

thirst, let him come unto Me and drink ;” he that cometh “shall receive manifold more in this present time.” It is an offer of nothing but good ; but it is declined, “with one consent,” on account of worldly engagements.

“But when the King entered in to see those who were reclining” at the table :—when at the Day of judgment the King shall come forth to view, to behold us whom He hath invited, those who are reclining at the Heavenly table, and “have found rest,” says Origen, “in faith and holiness,” then, before the Feast is set before them, shall the King enter. As He entered *“He beheld there a man that was not clothed with a wedding garment.”* There are many different interpretations of what this wedding garment may be ; some would explain it to mean that we must, as St. Paul says, “put on,” be clothed with, “bowels of mercy as the elect of God ;” or as St. Peter, “be clothed with humility ;” some would say faith ; and some, charity, which is the one thing needful ; and some, obedience. Thus Origen says, the nuptial garments are bowels of mercy and loving-kindness ; St. Austin, that it is seeking the glory of the Bridegroom, not our own glory ; St. Hilary says, the nuptial clothing and whiteness of the celestial dress, is the grace of the Holy Spirit ; Gregory says, What are we to understand by the nuptial garment but charity ; St. Jerome, that the marriage garment means the commandments of God, the works which are fulfilled from the Law and the Gospel, and form the clothing of the new man. Yet doubtless they all, under this beautiful variety of illustration and expression, tend to enforce, in a lively manner, but one and the same thing ; for he who keeps the commandments will necessarily obtain all these graces. Thus mercy and loving-kindness are but proofs of the grace of the Spirit ; and where the grace of the

Holy Spirit is, there also is love; and love is the keeping of the commandments; and being clothed with these is but putting on the New Man; and the New Man is Christ. Thus they are all included in that one saying of "putting on Christ;" and therefore Origen passes, as it were unconsciously, from one into the other, saying, "He that sinneth and putteth not on the Lord Jesus Christ, is speechless." All these things are the robe of Christ—that raiment which we have to keep pure and spotless and undefiled; the robe of Christ, the robe of the Spirit, the Baptismal robe, that of which the Prophet Isaiah speaks: "He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels¹." It is that bright garment, says Origen, of which Solomon spoke when he said, in Ecclesiastes, "Let thy garments be always white²." St. Chrysostom more fully draws out the same interpretation, "That even these might not trust in faith alone; He speaketh also of the judgment, which is to be on evil actions: to those who have not yet believed, He speaketh of coming to the faith; but to those who have believed, of the careful regulation of their life—for the garment is the life and practice; and indeed the calling was of grace. On what account therefore does He make so marked a distinction? Because to be called and made clean was of grace; but when called, and clad in clean garments, to persevere in keeping them so is the part of carefulness and zeal in them who are called. The calling was not of merit, but of grace. It behoved, therefore, to requite the boon by obedience, and not to exhibit wickedness after so great a privilege. But I have not enjoyed, you will say, as

¹ Isa. lxi. 10.

² Eccles. ix. 8.

much advantage as the Jews. Yea, you have much more. For you, though you were unworthy, have received at once what the Jews received through all time³."

"And He saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? But he was speechless. Then saith the King to His ministers, Bind his hands and feet, and take him, and cast him into the outer darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." The "Ministers" to whom the king now speaks are expressed by a different word to that of "servants," whom He sent to invite the guests, and may mean His ministering attendants, the Angels who are always spoken of as attending our Lord's second Coming. They are described at that time as being sent forth "to gather His elect from the four winds," as dragging the net to shore, as parting the good from the bad; or, as the reapers separating the tares from the wheat, and binding them in bundles to burn.

They bind those hands and feet, "which," as Origen says, "he had not used aright,—for he had not walked in the way he should have gone,—nor done the actions he ought to have done; and shall cast him, not only without the hearth of the marriage feast, but into the outer darkness which has not one ray of light; where, thirsting for light in that outer darkness, he shall weep to Him who is able to benefit, and to the God that can deliver him from thence, and shall gnash with his teeth, which through wickedness have 'eaten of the sour grape, and therefore are set on edge⁴.'" It may be observed, that this dreadful doom of the wicked is already presignified and anticipated in this world; for irreligion has the power of binding the hands and feet, of destroying free power of acting and walking

³ In Matt. lxi. 2.

⁴ In Matt. tom. xvii. 24. Jer. xxxi. 30.

uprightly, of putting out the light within, and removing from the light of God's presence. For the light within the room of the nuptial banquet is doubtless the light of God's kingdom. The night which in this world alternates with day, serves to represent the powers of darkness as here blending with the kingdom of God ; but when that kingdom, the kingdom of light, is removed, nothing will remain but night, a darkness which may be felt, an Egyptian darkness. That the effects of vice in this world do prefigure the captivity and the darkness which is here spoken of, as to be hereafter, is perhaps too obvious to need proof. Thus St. Gregory says, "Punishment shall then bind those whom guilt now hath bound from good works;" and St. Austin, "The enwreathing and binding of a depraved and distorted will, is the chain by which he is bound, who acteth so that he shall be cast into the outer darkness⁵." And Gregory says of this darkness, "We call the inner darkness, blindness of heart ; but the outer darkness, the eternal night of damnation⁶." The effect of vice in making the soul its slave and captive, in binding as it were the hands and feet, the motions of the will and powers of escape, and casting the soul into a state of spiritual darkness, is so obvious that even the more enlightened heathens allude to it. The point which Scripture discloses on this subject is, that this effect is produced by means of certain evil spirits to whom this permission is given of God, as if He had already said, "Because he hath not on the wedding garment, bind him hand and foot!" These consequences are irremediable in another life ; but the natural tendencies of sin to a state of utter ruin are evident even here ; and so remarkable, that the poet Lucretius represents all the accounts of eternal punishment in the heathen

⁵ Lib. xi. de Trinit. cap. vi.

⁶ Hom. in Ev. xxxviii.

mythology, as nothing else but a figurative description of the effects of different vices on the heart in this present state.

It is to this parable our Lord attaches those awful words which He uttered on another occasion, after the parable of the labourers being called into the vineyard. "*For many are called, but few chosen*" (Matt.). These words we may take to apply not to the last circumstances of the parable only, for one alone is described there as rejected ; but to the whole parable as including this. For if after so many and repeated invitations it is so difficult to bring together the guests ; and even afterwards some are not worthy ; then this very forcibly illustrates the awful saying. On which Origen says, "If any one will observe the populous congregations, and inquire how many there are who live a better kind of life, and are being transformed in the renewing of their mind ; and how many who are careless in their conversation, and conformed to this world ;—he will perceive the use of this our Saviour's voice, 'Many are called, but few chosen :''" and in another place it has been said, "many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able ;" and "strive earnestly to enter by the narrow gate, for few there be that find it." But St. Augustin speaks of this one person who is cast out as representing all the reprobates, who are, he says, many more than those who are elected. And Origen says that it is put in the singular number, "for they all are of one kind, who keep that wickedness after the faith, which they had before they believed."

SECTION VI

THE QUESTION OF TRIBUTE

THE previous question of the Pharisees, and our Lord's ensuing discourses, have served to supply a description of the nature and history of His kingdom unto the end ; such is the Father with the two sons, the vineyard or the Church of Israel, and the marriage feast or the Christian kingdom arising out of it, till the coming in of the King at the last day. And now that the true character of the kingdom of Heaven is set forth, it is requisite to show the position of that kingdom with respect to the kingdoms of the world. Our Lord's enemies, acting blindly in the prosecution of their own wicked projects, are made subservient to His own good purposes of instructing His Church, and serve to bring out that teaching in a marked and most practical way. So much do all things work together for good ; for the power and wisdom of God uses His enemies as well as His friends to execute the purposes of His will ; the actions of the wicked are overruled to minister to His glory and goodness. "When God arose . . . to help all the meek upon earth ; the fierceness of man shall turn to Thy praise ; and the fierceness of them shalt Thou restrain."

The Pharisees had now departed, and being deterred from all hopes of attacking with open violence from fear of the people, they endeavour to accomplish their ends by subtlety and the appearance of legal means. And, as parties that are most strongly opposed to each other will lay aside their mutual enmities, in their common hatred of

Christ, they combine with the Herodians, and adopt one of their party disputes to give a colour to their intentions in the question they propose.

"Then the Pharisees went and took counsel how they might ensnare Him in His discourse" (Matt.), *"having watched Him,"* St. Luke states, for that purpose ; and now, perhaps, for the first time thinking of destroying Him by means of the Roman governor, which might be done in spite of the people ; fulfilling thus, by their insidious approaches, the many descriptions of themselves in the Psalms, *"their throat is an open sepulchre ; they flatter with their tongue,"* *"they speak good words with their tongue, having war in their heart."* *"They came about me like bees."* *"They questioned Him with honeyed words,"* as has been said, *"and surrounded Him, like bees bearing honey in their mouths, but a sting behind."* *"And they send to Him"* (Matt., Mark) *"some of the Pharisees"* (Mark), *"their own disciples"* (Matt.), *"and"* (Mark), or *"together with"* (Matt.) *"the Herodians ; that they might entrap Him in His speech"* (Mark). But St. Luke, writing rather to explain the matter to Gentiles, says, *"They sent persons they had suborned, who should feign themselves to be just men,"*—as if they came with sincere intentions of instruction, as persons desirous to know how to act justly,—*"that they might lay hold of His speech."* The same Evangelist tells us of their purpose in so doing, *"in order to deliver Him up to the power and authority of the governor"* (Luke).

"It is probable," says Origen, "that at that time those among the people who maintained the payment of tribute to Cæsar were called Herodians, by those who were opposed to doing so; and those who, under the semblance of liberty, forbade the giving of tribute to Cæsar, appear to have been those Pharisees who were more strict in

adherence to Jewish doctrines." But St. Chrysostom seems to consider them soldiers of Herod. Herod would, of course, be obliged to maintain the Roman authority, and would be supported by that party among the Jews who would sacrifice religion to state policy. Theophylact indeed mentions that these Herodians were a new sect, who, because the Jewish kingdom had failed in its successions, maintained that Herod must be the Christ. The double design in laying the snare probably was, that if our Lord answered in favour of the Herodians it would have set the assembled people in the temple against Him; and, therefore, they put the question, as St. Luke expressly states, "in the presence of the people." But it appears to have been more particularly their design and expectation that our Lord would answer against the Herodians. This appears to have been the main design of their insidious approach. The fact of some having been lately killed on this account, and they too Galileans, "whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices," would have readily suggested such a design; and we find afterwards that Pilate is not only particularly alive to the charge of sedition, but the more so when he hears of the name of Galilee. "*And when they came*" (Mark) "*they asked*" (Luke) "*and say unto Him*" (Mark), "*Master, we know that*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*Thou art true*" (Matt., Mark), "*that Thou speakest and teachest rightly*" (Luke), "*and teachest the way of God in truth*" (Matt.), "*and carest for no man*" (Matt., Mark). "*Thou acceptest not the person*" (Luke), "*for Thou lookest not to the person of men*" (Matt., Mark), "*but in truth teachest the way of God*" (Mark, Luke). By the person of men, "secretly insinuating," says St. Chrysostom, "Herod and Cæsar;" or, as Origen suggests, "the Herodians, and

those who espoused Cæsar's interests." All this seems to imply that the Herodians' principle of submission to Cæsar was looked upon as actuated by human fear and policy; but that our Lord, notwithstanding the danger of such a declaration, would be regardless of consequences; and that if He was the Messiah, and led the multitude to suppose so, He must deny the power of Rome; and, moreover, His religious attention to the Jewish Law would suggest that His reply must be against the heathen government. And yet their mode of introducing it implies, that they considered it a very bold measure openly to go against both Herod and Cæsar. "As they had seen Theudas and Judas," says St. Chrysostom, "for this cause had perished a little before, as meditating rebellion, they wished to bring Him into the same suspicion." The subject of acquiescence or resistance to the Roman government was already a matter of vehement contention among the Jews; and afterwards, as God withdrew His protection from them, and the fence which He had set around His vine, the sacrilegious aggressions on the part of the Romans became more aggravating; and these contentions were causes of great violence and bloodshed. Herod would, of course, be on the side of Roman power, and in the time of Judas of Galilee mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles¹, and who espoused the opposite side, it was the tetrarch of those times that exhorted the people to acquiescence, and yielding to circumstances to pay the tribute. The state of parties on this subject is spoken of by Origen in his usual clearness and beauty of style².

"Tell us therefore, said they, What thinkest Thou?" (Matt.). *"Is it lawful (for us,"* Luke) *"to give tribute to*

¹ Acts v. 37.

² In Matt. tom. xvii. 25.

Cæsar or not?" (Matt., Mark, Luke). "*Shall we give or shall we not give?"* (Mark). "*But Jesus*" (Matt.), "*knowing their hypocrisy*" (Mark), "*and having perceived their craftiness*" (Matt., Luke), "*said (unto them,*" Mark, Luke), "*Why tempt ye Me*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*ye hypocrites?"* (Matt.) "*Show Me*" (Matt., Luke) "*the coin of the tribute*" (Matt.). "*Bring Me a penny that I may see it*" (Mark). "*And they brought*" (Matt., Mark) "*unto Him a penny*" (Matt.). "*And He saith unto them, Whose is this image and inscription*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*that it hath? And they answered*" (Luke) "*and said unto Him, Cæsar's*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). "*Then*" (Matt.) "*Jesus answered*" (Mark) "*and said unto them, Restore therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). With Divine authority He speaks and judges, not expounding as the Scribes. And thus, to those who had eyes to see and hearts to understand, there stood revealed before them the heart-searching God.

This was, in fact, the very thing they would not do, for to Cæsar they would not render that temporal submission which he required of them, but gave up to Cæsar the Anointed of God, lest "the Romans should come and take away their place and nation." Yet to God they refused to render that obedience He required of them for all His benefits. But our Lord's words shall find a fulfilment even in their disobedience, and they to God shall render up (that Sacrifice which alone is acceptable to Him, His only Son), "the Image of the invisible God,"—over whose Head is the superscription written, "The King of the Jews," by the hand of Pilate, and by the finger of God, "Holiness unto the Lord." And to

Cæsar they shall render up what they had given him, viz. their place and nation, for they said, "We have no King but Cæsar."

Herein our Lord has supplied Christians of all times with the clearest rule with regard to worldly politics that could be afforded, and laid down the distinctive lines between His own kingdom and those of earth. He teaches us to restore to the world—to the state—to the representatives of God's sovereignty, what is their due; not to be carried away by semblance of religion on the one side, and on the other not to sacrifice religion to views of worldly expediency, but to examine and look to our own duty in the case. To enter into abstract questions and extensive views of expediency is quite beyond the reach of the generality, and too often serves to mislead the most subtle who engage in them. But the plain case of right and wrong,—of restoring to the world what we receive from it, and of fulfilling an allegiance we have undertaken,—this is comparatively clear and easy. The regulation of forms of government is in the hands of God; all that is required of individuals is to fulfil their responsibilities, leaving to God the issues of things. And it may be observed, that the great injury which national Churches have sustained, has been from persons acting on worldly views of fear, and calculation of consequences, to the sacrifice of plain responsibilities,—of sworn allegiance as subjects, and fidelity to God as Christians. To this the observation of Origen will apply; "We are taught by our Saviour not to adopt opinions, that are supposed true merely because they are popularly received, but what is established by examination and attentive pursuance of the point in question. For observe, that when one asked whether it was necessary to give tribute

to Cæsar or not, He did not simply set forth His judgment ; but after He had said, ‘Show Me the tribute money,’ He inquired whose image and superscription it was, and when they said unto Him, Cæsar’s, He answered that we ought to restore unto Cæsar the things that were his, when he demanded them, and not to deprive him of his own from any false show of piety. Not of course that we are to restore to Cæsar what are his, and not to God the things that are God’s ; no one is hindered, by restoring unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, from restoring unto God the things that are God’s³.” Of this latter point St. Chrysostom⁴ very forcibly says, “such things only are due to Cæsar which are not injurious to piety ; for otherwise it is not to pay tribute unto Cæsar, but to the devil.” The precept contains within it what the Apostle expands by the words, “Give unto all their due, tribute to whom tribute, honour to whom honour.” But our Lord in His Divine wisdom has thrown this His precept into a proverbial form, so that, independently of the great and high things which are contained within it, it becomes ever known and remembered as a rule to guide in such matters. Quesnel well says, “We must never separate these two sentences, which Christ has joined with so much wisdom ; that so we may never do any thing contrary to the rights of God in obeying princes, and never violate the rights of princes under pretence of doing service to God.” “No reason, no conjuncture, no human power, can excuse subjects from being faithful to their prince, since Jesus Christ enjoins them to be so.” “None but an impious person makes any question of his duty towards his Sovereign. He who will not bear the yoke of God bears that of his prince with great regret,

³ In Matt. tom. xvii. 26.

⁴ Hom. LXX.

and thinks of nothing but how to shake it off. He who serves God serves his king ; it is one part of religion to serve God in the most lively image of His sovereign power. How can any one call in question the rights of this second majesty, without offending the first and eternal Majesty ?”

But the principle itself is capable of a more extensive signification. The things of Cæsar are the things of this world, the things appertaining to the body, to society, to the nation. There is a care due to the body, to society, to the world ; and these we are to fulfil, rendering unto all their dues, but so to fulfil them as to fulfil what is due to God. The body, the society in which we live, and the world are His ; and duties to them are duties to Him ; as well as the higher corresponding duties to the soul, to our own Church and to the Church universal. And they will in general be found compatible with each other, more so than our own pride or excited imaginations would often suggest. And indeed as the money of Cæsar has on it the image and name of Cæsar ; so does Cæsar in some sense bear the image of God, as being in things worldly His representative and ordinance ; and after the same figure or similitude it might be said, that these earthly relations are earthly images of things Heavenly : for the King, as the Vicegerent of God, is the representative of His power on earth, and the nation a figure of His Church ; and the care requisite for the body is an emblem of the care due to the soul. All these are ordinances of God ; and if they should interfere, the comparative importance of each must be taken into the account to regulate our duty. Thus Theophylact says, “the unavoidable needs of our own bodies are to each one of us as a Cæsar. The Lord therefore commandeth the proper dues of food and

clothing to be given to the body, but the things that are God's to God." The thought seems to have been from Origen⁵, who says, we may morally understand by it "that there are some things we must render unto the body, as tribute unto Cæsar. But whatsoever things are suitable to the nature of our souls, we must offer to God." He then proceeds to say that in this case also there are Pharisees, who deny to the body what is needful for it, out of a pretence of great strictness to God's law: others, again, like the Herodians, would, by indulging the body, deny to the soul all that is due to it. And St. Hilary⁶, likewise, that "we must render unto God the things which are His, that is, our body, and soul, and will." St. Ambrose also dwells with great beauty on the same heavenly lesson.

The coin of Cæsar is gold, on which his image is depicted. But the coin of God is man, on whom His image is stamped. Give, therefore, your riches unto Cæsar, but preserve for God your conscience and your innocence. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we must also bear the image of the Heavenly;" the earthly image, all that belongs to Cæsar, we have renounced at Baptism, that we may put on the New Man, and that our actions may bear the image of the Heavenly King. As, then, we have thus agreed with Him, let us take care to fulfil these our dues to Him; and we shall find that the more we renounce the things of the world, the less shall we have to restore to Cæsar of the things that are his—he who has the least to do with his image will have the less to pay him. As we have received the image of God at our second birth, let us endeavour to preserve and to restore that unto Him.

⁵ In Matt. tom. xvii. 27.

⁶ In Matt. Com. xxiii.

Yea, let us daily endeavour that our actions may receive His stamp and image: the more our actions receive the image of Christ, the more shall we have to repay Him; for the infinite price He has paid for us,—for His protecting care and daily providence. But He receives not as the kings of this world—for He needs not of any—nor any thing that we can pay, but lays it up in His own treasure-house, to restore it unto us again in the time of our greatest need. “For Thine is the Kingdom, O Lord;” “all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee.”

“*And they were not able to lay hold of His word in presence of the people*” (Luke): however deeply laid their plans, they were but as chaff before the wind, or as thorns which ministered fuel to the fire, that consumed them, and burned the brighter to enlighten others. As the Psalmist had said, “In the same net which they hid privily is their foot taken.” Thus already were our Lord’s words being fulfilled in them; they fell on that stone of offence and were broken. And that Stone was even now marvellous in their eyes, for they wondered and believed not: like unbelievers of all ages, they admire the exceeding greatness of His power and wisdom, as it is disclosed before them, but are unbelievers still. “*And when they heard*” it (Matt.) “*they marvelled*” (Matt., Mark, Luke) “*at His answer*” (Luke), “*and were silent*” (Luke). “*And,*” soon after “*they left Him, and departed*” (Matt.). “Such are they,” says Origen, “who let go the Word and believe Him not, and after they have heard, depart from Him. But we will say with the Bride, ‘I held Him and would not let Him go.’”

SECTION VII

THE QUESTION OF THE SADDUCEES

It was probably not immediately after, nor with any reference to what had taken place, but "*on that day*" (Matt.), when these things occurred in the temple, that "*there come unto Him (certain of,*" Luke) "*the Sadducees, who say that there is no*" (or "*who deny that there is any,*" Luke) "*Resurrection*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), denying, it appears, not only the resurrection of the body, but the immortality and future existence of the soul. There does not seem any particular design in their question beyond that of disproving, as they thought, a future state. "They supposed, forsooth," says Origen, "that no where in the books of Moses is there any mention of a future life; which opinion," he says, "existed to his time among the Samaritans, who were ready to contend to the death for the Law of Moses and for circumcision." We find this wild opinion had been put forth among some of St. Paul's converts at Corinth¹; the consequence of which has been, that we have gained his sublime and wonderful description of the Resurrection in his first Epistle to them. In like manner on this occasion the Sadducees, in their infidelity, are made to serve the great purposes of God in instructing His Church, and without which great things would have been wanting in Christ's expositions of His kingdom, on this great day of His teaching. For as He had set forth its nature, as arising

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 12.

out of the offence of the world ; and then by occasion of the last question had shown, how it is to be in the world, yet independent of earthly kingdoms ; it is now necessary to show its unearthly character, infinitely transcending all the conceptions of man, inasmuch as they who are admitted into that kingdom shall be equal unto the Angels. The question may also have served a Divine purpose, of manifesting before all men how debased become the thoughts of those who did not discern the Christ, having no sense of God's power or understanding of His word. For these Sadducees were, in fact, but one development of that low and earthly sense in which the Jews interpreted the Scriptures : so nearly connected with infidelity is the strict adherence to the mere letter of the Law.

"And they asked Him, saying, Master, Moses" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "hath written to us" (Mark, Luke), or "said, If a man die" (Matt.), "if a man's brother die" (Mark, Luke) "having a wife, and he die childless" (Luke), "leaving a wife and no children" (Mark), "that his brother shall take (shall marry," Matt.) "his wife, and raise up seed to his brother" (Matt., Mark, Luke). "Now there were (among us," Matt.) "seven brethren ; and the first" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "having married" (Matt.), "taken a wife" (Mark, Luke), "died, having no seed" (Matt.), or "dying, left no seed" (Mark), "but died childless" (Luke), "and left his wife to his brother. And likewise the second" (Matt.), "he also took her" (Mark, Luke), "and died and left no seed" (Mark), "but he also died childless" (Luke), "and the third" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "likewise" (Mark) "took her" (Luke), "and in like manner" (Luke) "the seven" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "also had her" (Mark), "and left no

children or seed" (Matt., Luke), "*and died*" (Luke). "*And last of all the woman died also. In the Resurrection therefore*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*when they shall rise*" (Mark), "*whose wife shall she be*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*of the seven?*" (Matt.) "*for they all had her*" (Matt.), "*for the seven had her to wife*" (Mark, Luke).

Such is the fictitious case they put, for it was not likely to be true, as the Jews were averse to the fulfilling of that law at all, which would have rendered its frequent repetition very improbable, especially in a case of deaths so extraordinary. But the objection, superficial as it is, has in it something not only of sensual levity, but also of coarseness and turpitude. Sensuality blinds the eyes, so as to create these apparently absurd difficulties; for being carnal in their own notions, they cannot imagine future life to be any thing but carnal; and therefore carnal difficulties occur, which oppose themselves as insurmountable obstacles to their belief. St. Ambrose and St. Jerome allude to, and Origen attempts at greater length to dive into spiritual mysteries and the deep things of God, contained in the whole circumstance of the seven husbands, and the Law that required this marriage of brothers. Although we are unable to pursue those higher senses which he, perhaps too fancifully, may discern in it; yet we may well suppose that this law of Moses—requiring as a duty what would otherwise, and were it not for this command, be repugnant to natural piety—did contain within it far more than the letter implied. And indeed one would be led to this supposition by the allusion of St. Paul to the law of a widow being free from her husband, in speaking of the Law and the Gospel. Quesnel falls in with some patristic exposition of this kind, and explains the widow in one place as representing the

Church, and her husbands as the Bishops. In another place the same writer says, "Moses and the Prophets, the Priests and the Doctors of the Law, are dead without raising up children unto God ; but Christ and His brethren the Apostles have espoused the Church, and raised up children to Christ their elder brother." But St. Augustin has a rather different interpretation, that by these seven brethren are mystically "understood wicked men, who have not been able to bear the fruit of justice in the earth through all the seven ages of the world ; for afterwards shall the earth herself pass away²." Might we not consider the Jewish nation itself as the parent of the seven ? We might take up this sense, and apply it to the whole case which was now so mysteriously going on. "She that hath borne seven languisheth ; she hath given up the ghost ; her sun is gone down while it was yet day³." Yea, even while the Light of life was among them. St. Ambrose speaks of the woman herself as representing the Synagogue.

It may be observed, that our Lord does not in His reply allude to this case itself, which they brought forward, but proceeds at once to lay open the causes of unbelief in their own hearts, which had given rise to such futile objections. Notwithstanding the nature of their question, and though He told them that "they greatly erred," yet He seems to answer them with less severity than He usually does the Pharisees. Nor are there in the Gospels denunciations against them, as there are against the Scribes and Pharisees. Whether it be that the greater knowledge of these made their condition worse in God's sight ; or that palpable infidelity is not so apt to deceive

² Quæ. Evan. lib. i. cap. xxxii.

³ Jer. xv. 9.

mankind as subtle hypocrisy. Great crimes do not seem to be so much denounced in the Gospels, as the more latent wickedness of the heart.

But our Lord in replying to so revolting an argument, gives us a perfect pattern of answering "with meekness and fear:"—"And Jesus answered and said unto them" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*Ye do err*" (Matt.), "*not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God*" (Matt., Mark). "*Do ye not therefore err?*" (Mark.) Here our Lord at once opens the source of infidelity, sensual materialism, and the like, in every age of the world. It is in vain to reason with such persons by any considerations of their own carnal speculations; their ignorance is seated in the heart. For faith is the key to the Scriptures; the knowledge of them consists in a practical apprehension of their spiritual meaning, in distinction from the literal. It may be observed, that in all these answers in the temple our Lord does not explain, as a human teacher would, the point in question as a matter of speculative inquiry, but immediately pronounces, as the God and Judge of all, respecting the secret motions of the heart; not illustrating or unfolding the difficulty of itself, but bringing forward the principles of eternal truth; by the application of which their own state of heart may appear evident to the inquirer, and the inquiry itself be thus explained to him. This it was that occasioned the astonishment of the people; "Because He taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes."

Thus wonderfully and mysteriously was it already taking place, that He Himself, who is "the Resurrection and the Life," was among them, but they discerned Him not, on account of these very reasons, viz. because they understood not the Scriptures, and because they perceived

not in Him the Almighty power of God, when thus manifested before them.

It appears, from the instances of faith recorded in Scripture, that faith consists in an acknowledgment more especially of the power of God, rather than of His goodness and wisdom. "Believe ye that I can do this?" appears to have been the rule according to which our Lord's miracles were performed. An assurance that "what God has promised He is also able to perform," is the characteristic which is given us of true faith. This knowledge of God, or capability of discerning His power and attributes, it is, which separates mankind from beasts; and when quickened by a Divinely-inspired faith, raises man above human nature, and unites him to God. All knowledge has been supposed to depend on some affinity and adaptation in the mind to the objects which it contemplates; and therefore, in distinction from the brute creation, man is made "in the image of God;" this power of discerning God is that which the sensual mind loses, and which the pure in heart more particularly attain unto. For without holiness no one shall see Him; and He that has this hope of seeing Him, "purifieth himself as He is pure." Which words, like all other requisites in Holy Scripture, are in some sense true of this life, and fulfilled in the kingdom of Heaven at present, as pledges of their higher fulfilment hereafter. And therefore the Sadducee or sensualist of every age has no power of acknowledging God or His good angels. These two causes of unbelief are connected together, for not knowing the power of God, they do not discern Him any more in the Scriptures, than they do in His Providence. Indeed, as Origen says, it does not appear that these doctrines which our Lord brings forth were to be found in the mere letter of Holy

Scripture, but that their eyes were closed by sensuality against the spiritual apprehension of them ; nor was their not understanding the Holy Scriptures merely owing to their not receiving for Scripture any thing but the books of the Law, but that they did not comprehend the Divine mind even in those Scriptures⁴.

In this case what they did not comprehend was, more especially, the power of God as seen in the resurrection of the body ; for to the natural man, who judges merely from known laws of nature, it is of course impossible. When they consider the changes that the body undergoes, from life to decay, from decay to corruption, from corruption to dust, and from dust into the elements, "they despair," says Gregory⁵, "of resurrection ; and when they behold the dry bones, they doubt of the possibility of their being again clothed with flesh, and again blooming in life." "But," as St. Austin says, "no earthly matter perishes unto God :"
 . . . "at a moment of time that is all restored to a human soul which first animated it, so as to become man, and live and grow." Surely, we may add, the Angels who will "gather the elect from the four winds" must have powers beyond any we now witness ; nor is such a transmutation in our frail bodies more miraculous, than was that in our Lord's body at the Transfiguration. But their not knowing the power of God may be taken more generally of unbelief, and not confined to the Resurrection.

"The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage ; but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead" (Luke), "in the resurrection" (Matt.), "when they rise from the dead" (Mark), "they neither marry nor are given in marriage" (Matt., Mark, Luke) ; "neither can they die any

⁴ See Study of Gospels, Pt. iii. § 2.

⁵ Mor. xiv. 55.

more, for they are equal to Angels" (Luke); "they are as the Angels (of God," Matt.) "which are in heaven" (Matt., Mark), "and are the children of God, being the children of the Resurrection" (Luke). "But they which shall be accounted worthy," says our Blessed Lord, speaking of it in a way to interest and alarm us, as in the Revelation, "he that overcometh," implying that by no means will all be admitted, but that it will be as a matter of pre-eminence and peculiar worthiness; and this not by partial or arbitrary selection, but such as are "accounted worthy" to attain that better world. Such are they who here on earth, in the sense of their own deep poverty have most hungered after, and therefore been most filled with, that righteousness which dwelleth in the "new heavens and the new earth;" and consequently are most worthy to attain that new life, and have a part in the second Resurrection, receiving glorified bodies like unto the Son of God, so purified as to be able to see Him; flesh and blood of His flesh and blood. Such can die no more; and where there is no death there is no need of marriage, but an angelic life. They must, indeed, be equal unto the Angels, when they are made like unto the Son of God, and formed out of His side; for Christ "took not on Him the nature of Angels, but of the seed of Abraham," and hath lifted our nature to the Right hand of God. Nay, such as lead on earth an angelic life, already anticipate that state, they already partake of the Resurrection from the dead, "are passed from death unto life," for they partake of the Flesh and Blood of the Son of God, of which "he that eateth can never die." They are the children of the Resurrection, for Christ is not only the Author of the Resurrection and the Giver of that better life, but He is in some sense Himself also "the Resurrection and the Life." Being therefore "the children of the Resurrection," they

are in some peculiar sense "the children of God;" for it was at His own Resurrection that our Lord for the first time called us "brethren," and added, "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and unto My God and your God." They therefore that are risen with Christ, have God for their God and for their Father, in a higher manner than He was the God of Abraham and the Patriarchs. Inconceivably great therefore were our Lord's words when He says, "They are the children of God, being the children of the Resurrection."

It may be observed, that the reference to Angels, and the life of Angels, in Scripture seems to have an allusion to one grace, which is that of virginal chastity: and it may be on account of some connexion with this subject, as well as from the consideration that purity of heart has the especial privilege of beholding God, as the Angels do, that this virtue beyond all others has been esteemed Angelical. "By not marrying in this world," says Tertullian, "they are numbered among the family of angels⁶." And perhaps a secret intimation of this subject might be contained in the Prophet Isaiah⁷, where God declares that to the eunuch He would give a place in His house, and "an everlasting name," "better than of sons and of daughters." Although this part of our Lord's declaration is not said to be in Scripture, yet it may be supposed to be contained in it. For though it is no where written that they shall neither marry nor be given in marriage in the Resurrection, yet we may conclude that as God is revealed in the Old Testament as a God of love, and a God of eternity, therefore faith may perceive that those whom He loves will partake of His eternal years. And then, of course, it follows that where there is no death there can be no mar-

⁶ Ad Uxor. lib. l. 4.

⁷ Isa. lvi. 5.

riage. "Marriage," says St. Austin, "is on account of children ; children on account of succession ; succession on account of death ; therefore where death is not, neither are there marriages." On the same subject the same writer uses this very beautiful image : "In like manner as our discourse now is composed and completed by the departing and succeeding of certain syllables, so men themselves, whose discourse it is, by the departing of some, and succeeding of others, compose and carry on the order of this world, which is made of the temporal beauty of the universe. But in that life, since the Word of God, which we shall enjoy, is not composed by the departing and succeeding of syllables, but, by ever continuing, containeth at once all things that He containeth ; so they who are made parts of Him, to whom He Himself alone will be life, shall not depart by death, nor succeed by birth⁸." And such is the life of Angels.

"*But as touching*" (Matt., Mark) "*the resurrection of*" (Matt.) "*the dead*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*that they rise ;*" (Mark, Luke) "*even Moses showed you at the bush,*" by the Name which, or "*as He speaks of the Lord*" (Luke), "*Have ye not read*" (Matt., Mark) "*in the book of Moses*" (Mark), "*that which was spoken to you by God*" (Matt.), "*how in the bush God spake unto him*" (Mark), "*saying, I am*" (Matt., Mark) "*the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ?*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). "*He is not*" (Mark, Luke), "*God is not*" (Matt.), "*the God of the dead, but (the God,*" Mark) "*of the living*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). "*For all live unto Him*" or in Him (Luke). And then, again, repeating the words He had first spoken with fresh emphasis, our Lord adds, "*Ye, therefore, do greatly err*" (Mark).

⁸ De Quæst. Evan. lib. ii. 49.

But with regard to that great fundamental error of heart (our Lord seems to say) which gave rise to their question, and their unbelief of the resurrection, even those Scriptures, which they considered most silent on this subject, did sufficiently contain it for those who had faith to understand. For as even the very Name of God by which He was revealed to them, "I am," denoted His own eternal existence; so did the addition to that term, by which He took the Patriarchs to Himself, denote also their immortality in Him. For how could He be their God if they had ceased to exist? it is a low estimation indeed of what is contained in the awful idea of God, if they who are His can be dead. To know and understand these things even in Scripture is a matter of faith, and infinitely progressive. None can adequately understand these things, but by faith they may enter into them more and more for ever. All live unto Him, for Him, and by Him, and in Him. He is a God of the living, for there is no life but for His service, and no death but in an unfitness for that service⁹.

Thus Theophylact says, "This term 'I am' is also used with relation to them, for if the Patriarchs had returned to nothing, and were not living unto God, He would not have said 'I am,' but 'I was.' But now, since He hath said 'I am,' He showeth that He is the God and Lord of the living; for although they have departed, yet they live with God in hope of rising again." "For the expression 'I am' implies present existence." But not only is the ever adorable and dreadful Name of the eternal Godhead here expressed, but the Three Persons of the Godhead also; for St. Jerome says, "By thrice naming God, He hath intimated the Trinity." But when he said, "He is not a God of the dead," by repeating the one God He hath

⁹ See Study of Gospels, Pt. iii. § ii.

signified one substance. And Origen¹, that there is a great and especial meaning in the expression that God is said of each of them by Himself, and singly, that He is their God; conferring thereby some peculiar privilege to each of whom He is thus spoken; and not like the Hebrews collectively, of whom He was said to be "the Lord God of the Hebrews." Great also is the blessing and honour contained in these words that St. Luke adds, "For all live unto Him;" which is no slight praise, says Origen, of the Patriarchs, in that such an one as our Saviour should bear testimony to them, not only that they live, but that the life they live, they live unto God, and unto none else. And this expression "All live unto Him," it were good for us in every way to exercise ourselves to comprehend, that all of us also in Christ should live to none else save unto God.

Thus not Pharisees only, but even unbelieving Sadducees sheltered and intrenched themselves, as it were, in the letter of Scripture, not having faith to enter into the sense or spirit of it; as if their reason for denying the Resurrection was because the books of Moses did not expressly mention it, whereas the real cause was the hardness of their own heart. Thus superstition will remain where piety is gone. The mere shell or exterior is highly prized, while all that for which it was alone of use, the substance, is lost.

Of this Quesnel well says, "The carnal Jews did not know nor understand the Scriptures, because they comprehended not the spirit of them; but explained, according to the letter only, those spiritual and eternal promises, which were wrapped up in the types and shadows of the law, as in a veil. Thus they were far from comprehend

¹ In Matt. tom. xvii.

ing the nature of that land of promise, which is the land of the living:—of that Jerusalem, of which God Himself is the founder and builder:—of that heavenly mountain, where the eternal covenant of the chosen people with their God shall be perfected:—of that glorious temple, which is the bosom of God Himself:—of that tabernacle which the Lord hath pitched, and not man:—of that High Priest of good things to come, who is Himself His own altar and sacrifice with His Church;—and of that promise which was to be fully accomplished only in Heaven, viz. That they should be the people, disciples, and children of God; and that He would be their God, their Teacher, and their Father. Let us, if we can, comprehend the power of God; and then we shall easily comprehend how He will fulfil all this in His elect.”

And now having kindled in us the desire of eternal and Angelic life, our Lord proceeds to point out the way to attain it,—by Love.

SECTION VIII

THE FIRST AND GREAT COMMANDMENT

THUS the contentions of men serve to bring forth the truths of the kingdom; and from these discordant elements does our Lord mould, and draw out, and place in the eyes of all men, the harmonious proportions and beauty of His new temple “not made with hands;” that which He had spoken of now establishing,—“the House of Prayer unto all nations;” Himself the Headstone of the corner,—its crown no less than Angelic life, and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob formed into one building with the “children of the

Resurrection," that "live unto Him;"—to be in the world, but not of the world, interfering not with the kingdoms of Cæsar, being the witness against them, but yet received within them. Within its walls is the marriage Feast waiting for the King's return, within it is light unspeakable, and without darkness that may be felt; and embowering its walls without is the true and living Vine, which "bears fruit" unto God. And now from the Ten Commandments does our Lord bring out in the sight of all men the love of God and the love of our neighbour, destroying the old Legal temple in His own death, and wresting from it in its fall those two great pillars, upon which to construct His new temple, in which all must worship Him "in spirit and in truth."

Thus, while men are disputing, their thoughts and words are in the Hand of God, we behold the Divine counsels being fulfilled, and all things Divinely ordered to lay deep the foundations of His eternal kingdom; as the Angel of old, who in the confusion of the captivity and the ruins of the old Temple, with the line and the measuring reed was marking out the dimensions of His future Temple, so was our Lord now "the Messenger of the Covenant," setting forth His Temple in which God is, its breadth and length, and depth and height;—its depth as being founded deep in God's eternal word, and in that His own Divine authority which the Baptist declared;—its height as touching with its top the highest Heavens, rising equal to the habitations of the highest Angels in Heaven;—its breadth and length as co-extensive with the love of God and the love of our neighbour.

We cannot but discern something of infinite Wisdom which brings forth at this time the Divine law of Love, as that by which alone men are made meet to have a

place in that Kingdom, and to obtain that Angelical life after death of which our Lord had been speaking. Yet the circumstances which introduce it appear to arise quite naturally, and in the order of events which take place in the temple; but ordered from eternity by infinite wisdom, events do but fall into the line and order appointed for them; and form a language by which Christ instructs His Church. One circumstance arises accidentally out of another, and new inquiries take place with various spirit and temper. But whatever the nature of the question may be, it is the occasion at the same time of answering what was in the heart of the speaker, of instructing the promiscuous crowd, and putting forth to all ages the highest truths of God. And perhaps it is a rule of God's providence generally in His Church, to be shown forth in its history, what here takes place as a type of it in the temple;—that by disputes and discussions and questionings, among those that engage in them under various feelings and motives,—and these sometimes not the most pure;—others of a temper more meek, it may be, and teachable are instructed; and the Church of all ages is furnished with great and saving doctrines.

Thus, as an universal principle, persecution is the strength of the Church, builds its spiritual walls, and scatters wide its seed; it is the Church's characteristic in all the prophecies, that it makes of a wilderness a garden, streams in the desert, and flowers on thorns. Indeed, the very title which God takes in His Evangelical Prophet is, "I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to My people, My chosen."

The effect of this remarkable reply respecting a future state was, St. Matthew says, that "*The people, when they heard it, were exceedingly astonished at His teaching.*"

In a manner so marvellous, with such authoritative wisdom, did He show from the Scriptures, which these Sadducees allowed, the doctrine of the undying nature of the soul; and spoke, as the Lord of Angels, of those Spiritual beings whose very existence this sect made a matter of controversy. Even Scribes, who were mingled among the crowd, forgot for a moment their enmity, moved with feelings of delight at finding their own cause against the Sadducees so maintained, and awed perhaps with the intrinsic beauty and majesty of our Lord's reply. "*And some of the Scribes,*" says St. Luke, "*answered and said, Master, Thou hast said well. And after that they ventured not to ask Him any further question,*" i.e. of an ensnaring or captious nature. This is confirmed by St. Matthew, who speaks at this time of the Sadducees being put to silence. Such a refutation of their adversaries would soon be carried to the Pharisees, and create some sensation among them, and perhaps some little of kindlier feeling. "*But the Pharisees, when they had heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence, were collected together*" (Matt.);—forming probably a little body in the temple, and now pressing more nearly upon our Lord to hear Him. "*And one of them being a lawyer put a question to Him, tempting Him.*" So St. Matthew says, and St. Mark mentions, it was "*one of the Scribes*" who "*came up to Him, and having heard them questioning together*" (i.e. our Lord with the Sadducees), "*perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him*" the question. He was probably actuated by mixed motives, partly of curiosity, as one Evangelist says it was tempting Him, or putting Him to the test; and partly from a sincere desire to know the truth, as would appear from the account of the whole circumstance which is so closely given by

St. Mark. Perhaps, indeed, this Scribe may be the same whom St. Luke mentions as signifying his approbation before. The expression of "tempting Him" both Origen and St. Chrysostom consider as implying that it was not from simple desire of instruction; and yet one would suppose that he was partly actuated by a sincere motive, from our Blessed Lord's acceptance of him, by saying he was not far from the kingdom. St. Augustin¹ suggests that "either he came first of all tempting Him, and was corrected by the answer of the Lord; or that the word tempting Him is not to be taken in a bad sense, as of one who wished to deceive; but rather was the cautious inquiry of one who wished to make a trial of one whom he knew not." "*Master*" (Matt.), said the Scribe, "*Which is the first of all*" (Mark), or "*Which is the great*" (Matt.) "*commandment*" (Matt., Mark), "*in the Law?*" (Matt.) "*But Jesus answered him*" (Mark), "*said unto him*" (Matt.), "*The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord; and*" (Mark) "*thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind*" (Matt., Mark), "*and with all thy strength*" (Mark). "*This is the first (and great,*" Matt.) "*commandment. And the second is like unto it, namely, this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*" (Matt., Mark). "*There is none other commandment greater than these*" (Mark). "*On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets*" (Matt.).

Blessed and Divine privilege, to be allowed to love Him who is infinitely good!—and not only allowed to do so, but commanded;—and commanded to love Him only, Whom to love is everlasting blessedness! But may

¹ De Cons. Evan. Lib. ii. cap. lxxiii.

we dwell on the parts of this love, and suck out the treasured sweets contained in each Divine word that describes it? Love in "the heart" is felt, and after some manner is understood also; love in the heart moveth all the natural affections; when that love which is natural to the flesh is turned to its one right object; when the natural love of gain is bent towards laying up treasure with God; when the natural love of praise is converted to the desire of God's approbation; then is the "heart right towards God." The heart is the seat of the passions and affections; whence the natural blood runs to every part, bearing life. The love of God must be seated here, throwing its life-blood into all affections and actions. The heart is in some more ardent, in others less so,—but according to that its natural warmth it must be all turned wholly unto God; then the eye, the ear, the senses will minister knowledge, and in so doing will move the heart.

But love in "the soul" is not felt, neither is it understood; as the eye that beholdeth all things else cannot see itself. This love consisteth in the judgment of the soul; which believeth that God is infinitely good, and that there is no good external to Him; which findeth its true life and rest in God only: so that as the souls in animals have their objects in which they rest, so the soul of man hath its repose only in God. Thus "as the hart desireth the water brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God;" "my soul thirsteth for Thee;" "my soul shall be satisfied, even as it were with marrow and fatness, when my mouth praiseth Thee;" "the desire of our soul is to Thy name and to the remembrance of Thee." This love of the soul is not in the passions and senses, is not passionate nor sensuous, nor is it ardent, nor in motion, but as the quiet

waters reflecting the image of the Heavens. Yet as there is a wonderful connexion and sympathy between the heart and the head, and an intimate correspondence, so it is with love in the heart and in the soul; they are both one from intimate union, though separate.

But the love of God fills "the mind," when knowledge gathereth all things with reference to God, when speculation ever weigheth the things of God with the things of men; when imagination compareth all things with the things of God; when memory storeth in her treasure things of God, new and old; when the thoughts ever turn to God as their end; when all studies are in God, and there is no study which hath not God for its end. We are always thinking of something, at all times and in all places; we can behold no object in the earth or sky but thought is busy with the same. The thoughts are according to the heart: if one might say it with reverence, as Angelic ministrations execute God's will, so are the thoughts to the heart and soul of man, ever busy, traversing, and returning through earth and Heaven, as the heart wills. And these in the good man are ever full of God.

We must love God "with all the strength" also: this, indeed, might be considered in one sense as understood in the others, and therefore St. Matthew omits the mention of it; but St. Mark, as intimating details, mentions this also. For what does it signify, but that these faculties of spirit and body are exerted, not remissly or perfunctorily, but with all energy, wholly to please God only? This is to love God "with all the strength." But however the parts of it may be variously explained, the whole of the commandment is comprised in the words of St. Augustin. "He hath left no part of our life which ought to be

disengaged, or to afford room for the engagement of any other object. But whatever else may have come to the mind as an object of affection, it may be immediately seized and carried in that direction where the whole current of our affection tends; for then is man in his best state when his whole life proceeds to the incommutable Good."

The heart of one may be more ardent, or large and ample than that of another; his soul more energetic; his understanding more intelligent and capacious; his strength greater; but they that love God with all that they are capable of are equally accepted with Him; for more talents are committed to one than another, but to all alike it may be said, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." The vessels may be of different dimensions, but all may be full—full of that Divine oil which is love, "filled with all the fulness of God."

"This is the first commandment;" first in order of time, it must go before every other, for unless it is the constraining motive that leads the way, no other commandment can be acceptably fulfilled. And it is the first in dignity—being the crown and perfection of them all. As St. Matthew adds, "it is the great commandment," and St. Mark, that "there is no other greater than this." For it is not only the consummation and excellency of them all, but is itself the fulfilment, and contains within it the assemblage of all the virtues. If this is fulfilled no other is wanting: if this is wanting no other is fulfilled. This is what St. Paul spoke of, as doing "all things in word or deed to the glory of God;" this is that fulfilment of the law, spoken of in the Book of Deuteronomy, which may be performed when "sitting in the house, and when walking by the way, when lying down, and rising up."

This it is which must be bound "for a sign upon the hand," and "frontlets between the eyes; written on the posts of the house and on the gates." These injunctions of the Law in all their parts are comprised in this one saying.

But our Lord teaches them again more than was asked, and tells them the second also, to love our neighbour as ourselves. To love oneself is an instinctive principle implanted in us by the Author of our being, and therefore good in itself, and the proper exercise of which will be a part of our duty to Him; for as the wise man hath said, "He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul;" and if our love to our neighbour is equal to this love of ourselves, then we shall fulfil every duty, and all will be peace and love. All peace within, for self-love will not reproach us for preferring other things to our ultimate and lasting good; and all peace without, for none can complain whom we love as ourselves. But our Lord combines the two, not only on account of the strict relation they bear to each other, but because the love of God being more intrinsic, and entering more into the inner temple, is less discernible and palpable in its indications. He sets forth the love of our neighbour, respecting which it is more difficult to deceive ourselves, and which may serve as a test or proof, for without it we cannot have the love of God. And this our Lord has often done, telling us if we love Him to keep His commandments, and these commandments are the love of our neighbour. Thus it is observable that to the rich young man, mentioned in the Gospels as coming to Christ, and who thought that he had kept the commandments, He put before him not the higher but the lower table, as the test of examination to him. For "he who loveth not his brother whom he hath

seen, how can he love God, Whom he hath not seen?" In this manner St. John in his Epistles sets forth, indeed, both these laws, but especially the second, as the proof without which we cannot have kept the first. And St. Paul in his mention of charity, or the love of God, includes both of these golden laws under it; but, when he comes to a detailed description of it, he dwells almost entirely on those indications of it which are taken from the second great law. For the love of God deeply seated in the heart is shown in these duties to others, and best discerned and characterized in these circumstances of external deportment.

Of these two commands the former is the greatest, for it is without limit or bounds, as it needs must be, for its Object is infinite; the latter has its bounds and limits, for its object is a finite creature. They are in one sense separate and distinct commands; in another sense they are but one and the same. For in both it is love, and in both the same love. And the greater necessarily contains within it the lesser, and the lesser necessarily leads to the greater. If either of these, therefore, is rightly fulfilled, the other is fulfilled also: and therefore either of them is sometimes put alone as including the other. As St. Austin observes². Since there are two precepts on which hang the Law and the Prophets, the love of God and the love of our neighbour; Scripture, not without reason, frequently puts one for both, either the love of God,—as in that expression, "For we know that to them who love God all things work together for good³,"—or the love of our neighbour,—as that the whole law is fulfilled in this one expression, "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." And in many other instances the love of our neighbour is

² De Trin. viii. cap. 7.

³ Rom. viii. 28.

alone given as the precept of perfection, and nothing is said of the love of God, when yet the Law and the Prophets hang on both ; and the reason is that "God is love ; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God⁴." To these reflections of St. Augustin we may add, that neither of these can be in itself true and genuine without the other also, as our Lord implied when He said, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice ;" not that mercy to man is better than duty to God, but that service to God is not acceptable without it. Nor can the love of ourselves or of our neighbour be true and genuine without the love of God ; for it is not properly love without it, inasmuch as it is not our own true good or our neighbour's true good that we desire, if we do not love God : nor do we desire it in a way by which it can be obtained, unless it is from God that we desire it for them. Even the holy Angels, says St. Austin, are contained under this law of loving our neighbour, as is shown by their offices of love to us. We may add, that even our Blessed Lord represents Himself as acting by this law, when teaching us the love of our neighbour, in the parable of the good Samaritan, He represents Himself as assisting the man who was half dead. In another place⁵ St. Augustin says, "But if you ought to love yourself, not on account of yourself, but on account of Him with whom there is the most right end of your love ; let not any man take it ill, if you love him also for the sake of God. Whosoever therefore rightly loveth his neighbour, ought so to deal with him that he too with his whole heart may love God." And this is perhaps the reason why our Blessed Lord speaks of these two commandments as resembling each other. On this account, says Theophylact, He says that it is like, because these

⁴ 1 John iv. 16.

⁵ De Doc. Christ. Lib. i. xxii.

two commandments are naturally consonant with each other, and may be reciprocally changed. For he who loveth God, loveth also His workmanship ; and the principal of His works is man ; from whence he who loveth God must love all men. But he who loveth his neighbour, who oftentimes affordeth him cause of offence, much more must he love God who always affordeth him benefits ; and therefore, on account of the coherence of these two commandments, He addeth, "there is no other greater than these."

On these two hang not the Law only, but also the Prophets, both indeed combined as forming the whole of Scripture ; and perhaps also as separate, for these two commandments not only fulfil the Law and all precepts of duty, but these alone lead to the understanding of that which is strictly prophetic. For the love of God is the key to the unfolding of all prophecies, and the meaning of all mysteries. And therefore it was that from want of this Divine love the Pharisees failed, not only in the fulfilment of the Law, but also in the interpretation of all prophecy respecting the Messiah. Thus Origen explains it, "Because he that hath fulfilled all things that are written concerning the love of God and our neighbour, is meet to receive such great grace of God as to understand all the Law and the Prophets."

But this Scribe, who so wisely replied to our Lord's teaching, had something in him which admitted of a better hope ; nor is there any other instance of a Pharisee or Scribe who so apprehended our Lord's words. "*And the Scribe said unto Him, Well, Master, Thou hast spoken of a truth ; for there is one God ; and there is no other beside Him. And to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the*

strength, and to love one's neighbour as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt-offerings and the sacrifices. And Jesus having perceived him, that he answered with understanding, said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God" (Mark). From these words we may well consider what it is that brings persons near to Christ's kingdom. Our Lord in His explanations of the written word of God, had been drawing out from the letter of Scripture great essential truth, as the lifegiving principle contained therein, and showed doctrines infinitely Divine, surpassing human comprehension, laid up in expressions apparently admitting of but low human interpretations. From the Name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He had elicited the doctrine of eternal life : from the commandments, the love of God with all the heart, and of man as ourselves. Thus does the letter of Scripture serve for the material form which, at the command of Him that made it, discloses the living soul that animated and gave life to all portions of it. It is evident that his discerning this spiritual nature of the commandments was in this Scribe that which brought him near to the kingdom of Heaven ; for the Spirit alone can lead us to the understanding of His own word, and to the Gospel of the kingdom laid up within it. This spiritual meaning of the commandments the rich young man, who "went away sorrowful," did not perceive, and therefore thought that he had kept them ; but an earnest apprehension of this truth would have opened the mind to instruction, and constrained him to look to Christ as a means of escape, and a "city of refuge" from the terrors of the Law. To see this spiritual meaning of the Law, was to be near the kingdom ; for to know was one step towards doing, and by doing we come more to know ; and he who laboured to love God with all his heart, would attain to

all those graces which the Gospel requires ; for this love, under a sense of its own want, knits the soul to Christ, partakes of the virtue of His Sacraments, and the benefits of His Cross.

St. Chrysostom observes in these circumstances that custom of our Lord's of holding back the fuller revelation of Himself and His Divinity ; for when He cites from the Book of Deuteronomy, "The Lord thy God is one Lord," it might have been thought He was not speaking of Himself as that one God. "But as the time for revealing His Godhead was not yet arrived, He permits him to continue in his former opinion, and praises him for rightly understanding ancient things, so as to render him meet for the apprehension of the new doctrine, which He would introduce in its own time⁶." And now having brought them thus far to the spiritual meaning of the commandments, and to the love of God, which was the key to His Gospel, He proceeds imperceptibly to lead them on to the knowledge of Himself, and that not openly or by full declaration, but by interrogating them ; in order that, having afforded that clue, they who would search the Scriptures might be led by the Father to the revelation of Himself. "To correct this their saying," says St. Chrysostom⁷, "that He was the Son of David, as considering Him a mere man, He introduces the Prophet bearing witness to His kingdom, and true Sonship, and as in honour equal with the Father.

⁶ In Matt. Hom. lxxi.

⁷ Hom. in Matt. i. lxxii.

SECTION IX

OUR LORD'S QUESTION OF THE SON OF DAVID

THE holiness, authority, and wisdom of these replies had struck with awe all the multitude, even those who from their anger or subtlety, or bold profaneness of temper, or superior skill in the Law, had before ventured to come forward. St. Mark, after mentioning the answer of the Scribe, and our Lord's approval, says, "*And no one any more ventured to ask Him any further question.*" It was therefore at this time, when they were thus silenced, that our Lord puts forth a question—partly to the Pharisees, who after our Lord's answer to the Sadducees had been collected in a group, and were now drawing close to Him; and partly, perhaps, for the sake of the multitude, as would appear from St. Mark and St. Luke. It is one to be deeply attended to, as being that which our Lord Himself brings forward at this important crisis to this assembly, and the last of His teaching. It was a question it would appear of deep compassion at their unbelief, and directed to correct those secret thoughts of their heart, which led them now to look upon Him with these feelings of mistrust and hatred. His answers and doctrine had now impressed them with an involuntary awe at beholding some irradiations of His Divine Majesty, and He had set forth the great law of love which was the road to the kingdom. If any thing, therefore, would move those that were present (and it might be hoped that some, like the Scribe, were not far from the kingdom), it would be a consideration of that high and mysterious dignity with which their

own Scriptures invested the Messiah. Low and carnal apprehensions of the Messiah were at the root of their present unbelief. It is this, therefore, that our Lord now endeavours to remove, not by openly announcing Himself, but by sending them to those difficulties of Scripture, in a serious consideration of which they might be brought to a sense of what He was: disclosing, as in the former instance, from what might have appeared casual expressions of Holy Writ, the highest doctrines of our faith, and directing their attention to the whole of that Psalm which spoke so wonderfully of Himself. Thus did He instruct them by these secret means, not only concerning the Messiah, but also of His own spiritual kingdom, and His Ascent into Heaven; and especially of that one great doctrine which seems to have been His object at this time, to have impressed upon them¹,—as by His declaration before the High Priest, and by His Apostle St. Peter², and by St. Paul to the Hebrews,—of His sitting at the right hand of God till His enemies were made His footstool. Full therefore of deep and Divine wisdom was this question of our Lord, and Divinely suitable to the place it occupies, as the last words of His public teaching.

“And Jesus answered and said,” proceeds St. Mark, *“as He taught in the temple;”* and St. Luke still more expressly, *“He said unto them,”* i. e. to the multitude to whom the discourse was generally turned, although first addressed to the Pharisees. But St. Matthew, mentioning perhaps the beginning of the discourse, says, *“And when the Pharisees were collected together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye concerning Christ? Whose Son is He? They say unto Him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call Him*

¹ See Study of Gospels, p. 161.

² Acts ii. 34.

Lord ?" (Matt.) Then perhaps addressing the multitude more generally, "*He said unto them, How say they*" (Luke), or "*How say the Scribes*" (Mark), "*that Christ is the Son of David ? For David himself saith*" (Mark, Luke), "*by the Holy Spirit*" (Mark), "*in the book of Psalms*" (Luke), "*The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. (If,*" Matt.) "*therefore*" (Matt., Mark), "*David (himself,*" Mark) "*call-eth Him Lord, how (and from whence,*" Mark) "*is He his son ?*" (Matt., Mark, Luke.) "Seeing," says Origen³, "that the Pharisees, as being capable of understanding what referred to the human dispensation, understood from the Scriptures that He was of the seed of David according to the flesh, and supposed Him perhaps to be no more than the son of David; and seeing that they were far from comprehending His Divinity in that He was the Beginning of all creation, the Son of none but of God, Who is over all; wishing to put to the proof their uncertain opinion concerning Himself, and excite in them by His discourses a desire to ascend to the Word, which was God, and was in the beginning with God; He says first of all, 'What think ye concerning Christ? Whose Son is He?' and when they answer, 'David's;' He replies to them, manifesting the loftiness of His Divinity, which was shown in the very beginning of the Psalm, saying, 'The Lord said unto My Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.' So that although they were then unable to answer Him, yet they might take occasion from His words, and considering the whole Psalm, they might have higher thoughts of Christ. . . . But the reason why the Pharisees were unable to answer Christ's words was, because they did not consider any thing great

³ Comm. in Matt. ad loc.

said concerning the Christ in the Holy Scriptures, but only of the human economy, and not even of that worthily of a Divine dispensation." "They are not reprehended in this place," says St. Ambrose⁴, "because they confess Him to be the Son of David, for that blind man by confessing Him to be the Son of David, merited his restoration: and the children saying, 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' gave glory to God; but they are reprehended, because they do not believe Him the Son of God." . . . "In finishing His precepts, He would establish our faith in Him previously to His Passion, that we may believe Him to be the Christ, our Lord and our God, and as sitting on the right hand of the Father. Not that we are to suppose bodily sitting of Him, Who is every where present." "But the power and the majesty," he adds, "is one; neither is He preferred Who sitteth at the right hand: nor does He suffer detriment Who is admitted: gradation of dignity is not sought for where there is fulness of divinity." And Augustin, of this sitting at the right hand of God, says⁵, "By this sitting we must not suppose any position as if by human limbs; as if the Father were sitting on the left and the Son were sitting on the right: but by the Right hand we must understand that power which He hath received as Man, in that He is accepted of God that He may come to judge, Who first came to be judged." "This sitting in God," says St. Cyril, "signifies kingdom and power over all. He sitteth at the right hand of God the Father, because the Word goeth forth from the substance of the Father, and being made flesh, hath not unclothed Himself of Divine dignity." "Let us therefore," says St. Ambrose, "believe Christ to be both God and Man; to Whom by the Father His enemies are made subject, not

⁴ Lib. x. in Luc.

⁵ De Symbolo. Lib. ii. cap. vii.

through infirmity of power, but through unity of nature, for either worketh in the other : for the Son subjecteth His enemies to the Father : inasmuch as He glorifieth the Father upon earth." Origen observes that the expression of His foes being made His footstool is not their destruction, but their salvation and glory, for the word is thus used in Scripture, as applied to Israel, He hath "cast down the beauty of Israel, and not remembered His footstool." And is also applied to the earth, "Heaven is My throne ; the earth is My footstool."

To the above question St. Matthew adds, "*And no man was able to answer Him a word ; neither did any man venture, from that day forth, to ask Him any thing more*" (Matt.). "*And the great multitude,*" says St. Mark, "*heard Him gladly.*" Each of the three Evangelists alludes about this time to the silence of those around Him,—that no one ventured further to question Him,—but each applies the mention of it to a different circumstance, or speaks of it on a different occasion. At all events this silence of His adversaries was striking ; and it proved that their questions had not been from any sincere desire to learn. As Origen observes, "If their inquiries had been from a desire of learning, He would never have set before them such things that they would not venture to ask Him any further questions." It is remarkable also as setting forth this fact, that (in the words of Quesnel) "truth at length triumphs through the wisdom and word of Christ ; but the defender of it will notwithstanding, be oppressed in the sight of men." This also seems to contain a great principle, to be ever exemplified in the history of the world.

It may be that this authoritative teaching in the temple was prophetic and typical of our Lord's teaching in

His Church to the end, where "He shall sit as a Refiner;" sending forth His words, which "run very swiftly," even unto the ends of the earth; His words, which are "pure words, even as the silver which from the earth is tried, and purified seven times in the fire." Thus has it been in her history, great points of doctrine have been controverted by evil or erring men,—been disputed, established, settled,—they remain, but the disputants retire, and silence ensues. Then again other controversies arise and other questions, and they too are decided by the voice of truth in the Church, and sink also into silence. It may be that disputations against the truth of Christianity will thus, as the world draws to the close, be silenced. Meanwhile "the Lord is in His holy temple; the Lord's seat is in Heaven. His eyes consider the poor, and His eye-lids try the children of men." Thoughtlessly and captiously they consider Him, and idly approach Him before the people; but all the while His eye-lids try their inmost reins, while He is consulting for His own poor, the poor in spirit who inherit His kingdom.

SECTION X

CAUTION AGAINST THE PHARISEES

ALL therefore were now silenced; and we may well inquire what were the thoughts and feelings of the multitude, who flocked around Him, and "heard Him gladly," respecting the amazing and yet perplexing scene going on before their eyes; wisdom evinced, more than human:

yet those to whom they had been used to look for guidance, their appointed instructors, and whom they supposed to understand the Scriptures, disbelieving and denying. This must have been their great difficulty, and it was the very thing suggested to the man restored to sight, "Have any of the rulers believed on Him?" In order, therefore, to remove this secret stumbling-block in their minds, as well as out of awful warning to the Scribes themselves, we may well suppose that our Lord's next words are addressed; as if He had said, Think ye it strange that none of them believe? "How can" they "believe who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" The whole matter depends not on intellectual acuteness, or knowledge of the letter of the Law, but entirely on the state of the heart. Take ye heed, therefore, of such ways, and the pride and the blindness of heart they will lead to. Thus they come to handle holy things, and reverence them not; their condemnation will be the more heavy for their knowledge. And perhaps here we might introduce that solemn and touching passage before spoken of in St. John¹, where it is said that "they loved the praise of men rather than the praise of God." Thus as our Lord in all these controversies had spoken as the God and Judge of mankind,—as judging the hearts of those that questioned, and those that listened, being Himself "the Way, the Truth, and the Life,"—so now more fully does He speak as their God and Judge; while His words are fire and light, not only to guide and cheer, but also to detect and consume.

"And He said unto them in His teaching," says St. Mark; and St. Luke that, *"In the hearing of all the people He said to His disciples,"* but St. Matthew, *"Then*

¹ Ch. xii. 39. 50.

spake Jesus to the multitude and to His disciples." This variety of expression affords us an exact description of the circumstances, our Lord combining, at the same time, instruction to disciples, explanation to the multitude, and warning to Pharisees. "*Beware*" (or *take heed*) "*of the Scribes*" (Mark, Luke). "*The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat;*" they are indeed appointed of God; I would not therefore have you forsake their ministrations, for God is best found in His own ways; "*all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe,*"—as sitting in Moses' seat, i. e. as teaching from Moses, as St. Hilary and St. Jerome understand it,—"*that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say and do not*" (Matt.). This is the reason why they cannot believe in Me, for "*if they had believed Moses,*" and kept his saying, "*they would believe in Me;*" but instead of this, "*they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves are not willing to move them with one of their fingers.*" "He said not," says Chrysostom, "*they cannot, but they will not; nor did He say will not bear them, but will not move them with their finger, not approach nor touch them.*" All their exact scrupulousness in the Law, and those additions which they make the subject of their sanctified professions, only serve to oppress the simple-minded and meek, who are desirous to fulfil them; while such overstrained precepts affect not themselves on account of their hardened consciences. And what is the meaning of all their religion? It is all insincere. "*All their works they do for to be seen of men;*" and for this purpose they take the letter of the law, and observe it for the purposes of their own ambition, to the entire neglect of the spirit of it; "*they make broad their phylacteries,*" ambitiously

adhering to the words of Holy Scripture², "*and enlarge the borders of their garments*" (Matt.); but not to do as God spoke³, viz. "to look on the fringe of blue" there prescribed, and "remember the commandments and do them, and that they seek not after their own heart:" on the contrary, they performed those very things in order to "seek after their own heart" and "the sight of their eyes." So superstitiously and ostentatiously did they adhere to the letter of the commandments, which only meant by these figurative expressions, or observances, that the Love of God should be the principle of every action in every place. And this same pride, which here shows itself under the veil of the Law and religious exactness, appears through all their actions; "*They desire to walk about in robes*" (Mark, Luke), "*and love the chief couches at feasts, and the chief seats in synagogues, and the salutations in the markets*" (Matt., Mark, Luke); "*And to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi*" (Matt.).

"The Lord," says St. Jerome⁴, "when He had given the commandments of the Law through Moses, added at the end, 'Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be ever before thine eyes;' meaning, Let My precepts be on thy hand to be fulfilled in thy works; before thine eyes, that thou mayest meditate on them day and night. This the Pharisees wrongly interpreting, wrote the decalogue of Moses on parchments, binding them on their forehead, and making them like a crown of the head; so that they should always be before their eyes. Another thing which Moses had commanded was, that they should put fringes of blue in the borders of their garments; so that as circumcision

² Deut. vi. 8, and xxii. 12.

³ In Numbers, xv. 39.

⁴ Com. in Matt. xxiii.

served for a mark of the Jewish nation on their bodies, their dress also might have some distinction. But these superstitious masters catching at the popular applause, and gains from silly women, enlarged these borders, and bound them with sharp pins, so that as they walked or sat they might be pricked, and by these monitors be called back to the service of God. Such they called phylacteries or preservatives. These Pharisees understood not that these were to be carried in the heart, not on the body ; for otherwise in the same manner the shelves of a library may have books, but they have not the knowledge of God."

In all this our Lord does not depreciate their authority ; on the contrary, requires others to regard it ; but condemns their lives, which were the more criminal for that authority with which they were commissioned, and which rendered that very authority a snare to them. He shows at the same time that His own precepts were not contrary to those of Moses, but were rejected because those of Moses were not sincerely observed. And in the greatness of His wisdom and foresight, He teaches His Church to look to the seat of authority, whatever may be the character of those who may occupy it. "After the coming of Christ," says Origen, "they sit on the seat of the Church, which is the seat and the throne of Christ." The same writer proceeds to apply what is said of the Pharisees more generally, and says our Lord here reprehends those teachers who not only do not what they teach, but enjoin things cruelly and without pity, not according to an estimation of the strength of each disciple, but beyond their own virtue. And he applies this, as if by a sort of prophetic anticipation, to the case of those who forbid to marry, and command to abstain from meats, and

other like things, to which faithful men ought not to be compelled, as they are heavy burdens of their own exposition beyond the will of Christ, Who says, "My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." And many of these do not, he says, themselves observe the chastity and abstinence which they teach.

Such is the opposite to the duty of a good ruler, which is, says St. Chrysostom, in all things appertaining to himself to be an unrelenting and unpardoning judge, but with others subject to him to be gentle and apt to pardon. We cannot, indeed, but observe how entirely the reverse it is to the forbearance and considerateness of our Lord's own teaching; proportioning the duties He exacted according to the powers and respective attainments of His disciples. Their yoke was heavy and grievous to be borne,—because it was the law in the letter and not in the spirit; external duties without charity; pretended humiliation without humility; by command, not by example. But Christ's "yoke is easy, and His burden light," because meekness takes off the weight, and charity gives delight to duty; the yoke is alleviated by the example of the Son of Man, going before, and sharing the weight of the Cross, and is sanctified by that virtue that emanates thereby from the Son of God, and that Anointing, which they that follow Him partake of. Indeed, the whole of their conduct is set in strong contrast to that which our Lord requires of His own disciples, and of which He set the example. They desired to be seen of men; the true disciples of Christ to be hid from men, and for their works to be seen of God only. The former seek to magnify themselves, the latter to humble themselves. The former pray in the corners of the streets, the latter in their secret chambers. The

former are severe to others and spare themselves, the latter gentle to others but severe with themselves. The one takes the highest place at feasts, the other according to His Master's precept, the lowest; and according to his Master's example, Who said, "I am among you as he that doth serve." The one devours widows' houses, but the followers of Christ do especially cherish and support the widow, and build up her house by merciful charity. The latter behold the things which are unseen and eternal, and do alms, and fulfil the law in secret, being inwardly and spiritually of the stock of Abraham; "for he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, nor is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter." Such, doing their works to be seen of God, bind the law of God on their hand spiritually by good works; and by continual meditation on the Divine commands, make them as frontlets between their eyes.

"But be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father which is in Heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But He that is greatest among you shall be your servant. For whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Matt.). Here our Lord lays down the great principle on which all precedence in His eternal kingdom will be regulated, and on which all Christian graces now are formed, and all this arising from some peculiar efficacy in the humiliations of Christ. Nor is it only the foundation of the Christian character in each individual, but the principle to be developed also in the

history of the Church, according to the observance of which its strength and welfare would depend. Thus it is to be observed that the Church Catholic is known under no name but that of Christ, whereas all sects are distinguished by the name of some one whom they call their father and master. It may be the case in the Church itself; were individual influence much to prevail, the effect would not be Catholic, but peculiar, and stamped with human error. Again, there may be something of prophecy in this, as in many of our Lord's commands; for in the Church Catholic itself, unity has been broken whenever this principle has been departed from: for to the Apostolic body it has been said emphatically, "all ye are brethren." But the Bishop of Rome has not been content with the precedence of an elder brother in the see of St. Peter, but has claimed that of a master and father; and this command of our Lord being broken, the unity and strength of the Church has been lost. But it may be asked, Does not this command militate against the authority of individual Bishops over their flocks altogether? It will be found on consideration that it does not do so; on the contrary, that this divinely commissioned authority is the only remedy against the ambition which breaks up societies. That this command, like every other, is not to be taken in the letter, but in the spirit, is evident; for, in the first place, we have natural parents, and we have masters, to whom these appellations of reverence are due; and also in some sense spiritual fathers, for St. Paul⁵, on more occasions than one, takes to himself the title of father, and St. Peter also. But of course our Lord's caution is against what St. Paul condemns in those who said, "I am of Paul and I of Apollos." That the divinely

⁵ 1 Cor. iv. 15; Phil. 10.

delegated authority is to be regarded as such, is implied in the command of our Lord to obey those who "Sit in Moses' seat;" but even in this case, if men are not content with yielding obedience to the authority, but give weight to the personal opinion even of any Bishop, as distinguished from that of the Church, it would be to sin against this command. And a Bishop himself would sin against it, as Origen observes, if he were desirous to be called Rabbi, i. e. was pleased with the authority and power of a Bishop. What Bishop Wilson says must ever be true: "Such external marks of dignity are painful to a humble-minded Bishop." "He teaches," says Bede, "that such as love those things unduly, whether they have them or no, are to be avoided by the faithful as wicked men." And of course he who is most ambitious of that authority is the least fit for it. St. Chrysostom⁶ says with much feeling, in an age far better than ours, "though these things may be thought trifling, they are the cause of much evil. These things have overturned cities and churches. Nor can I abstain from tears when I hear of first seats and salutations, and consider what evils have thence arisen to the Churches of God: things which it is not necessary for me to speak out to you now, especially as they are elders and need not learn these things from us." St. Augustin, as well as Origen, seems to think that all the judgments on the Scribes and Pharisees have an especial reference to Bishops under the Gospel. The only remedy against ambition in the Church must be by looking on the authority which is in the seat of Christ without respect to persons: this humbles the governor and governed by the weight of responsibility; but without this there must be a father, a master, a leader. And of

⁶ Hom. lxxii.

all alike it will be found true at last, that he who would be the highest at feasts, and the highest in the visible Church, will be the lowest at the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the lowest in the invisible Church in Heaven ; and to this the Feast and Assembly in Heaven, the feasts and synagogues, which our Lord speaks of, may allude. To obtain the highest place in those heavenly assemblies is the one sole and great endeavour of the true Christian, "Hastening," as Origen says, "by good actions to render himself worthy of these seats." But to be called Rabbi by men, or by any other, is what the just man loves not, knowing that there is one Master of all, and all who are subject to Him are brethren to one another. "And who is he," says Origen, "who calls no man father upon earth, but he who by doing every action as in God's presence, says 'Our Father which art in Heaven'?" Doubtless by thus referring all our conduct to our "Father Who seeth in secret," and by this genuine spirit of adoption, we shall escape the snare of human partialities. Of this expression, that "He that exalteth himself shall be abased," the last mentioned writer beautifully observes, "I wish indeed that all men would hear this, especially deacons, and presbyters, and Bishops, they who think that these things are not written for them ; for not understanding this saying, that 'He who exalteth himself shall be abased,' they listen not unto Him Who hath said, 'Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.' But they are inflated with pride, and through their inflation they fall into the condemnation of the devil, when they ought to remember the words of Wisdom, which saith, 'The greater thou art the more humble thyself, and thou shalt find favour with God';" which the Lord first of all consummated.

⁷ Eccclus. iii. 18.

For according to His greatness 'did He humble Himself^s.'"

What indeed are all these sayings but comments on that one, "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart"? What are they but modes of access to Christ? And why is it the universal law, "that he who humbleth himself shall be exalted," but as feeble shadows of that pattern of Him, "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself of His glory, and taking the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself unto death, the death of the Cross; therefore God hath exalted Him, and given Him a Name above every name"? And so will He according to this law, exalt every one in Christ who after the same example humbles himself.

But the whole of this teaching in the Temple is strikingly illustrated by the discourses of our Lord in the fifth chapter of St. John. First, the testimony of John is mentioned, "there is another that beareth witness, ye sent unto John;" secondly, "the works that I do in My Father's name bear witness of Me;" thirdly, "search the Scriptures;" in the fourth place, "ye have not the love of God in you;" and lastly, "how can ye believe, who receive honour one of another?"

These principles thus brought forward are not only of intrinsic weight as doctrine, and cardinal points of truth in the Christian, but they possibly may contain in them something prophetic of the last ages of the Church, as the same principles of evil and of good develope themselves more and more fully while time goes on. Accordingly all these cautions and warnings may be both

^s Com. in Matt.

admonitions and also prophecies to us, on whom the ends of the world are come. First of all, the people are cautioned that they are not to reject the authority of appointed teachers, on account of the corruption of their lives and their want of faith. Thus the Church is preserved entire, God's ordinance and blessing is preserved, unity is preserved, truth is preserved. Secondly, we have the worst developments of evil in the pale of the priesthood, ambition and avarice finding therein a cloak, being in themselves worse, and more irremediable on account of their privileges. Evil, in some degree like Antichrist, "standing where it ought not," and "in the holy place." It is remarkable that on Scribes and Pharisees, the ministers of religion, the woes are pronounced. They, and Judas chosen to be an Apostle and witness of Christ, are throughout Scripture the very types of the wicked. And yet of the people it might be said, if they follow not their doctrine, and adhere not to their authority, they believe not, for it is the doctrine of Moses and the authority of God; if they follow their lives they perish, for they are the children of Satan. From the former great principle not being attended to the Catholic Church is already broken; from the latter—i.e. from following the lives of worldly-minded ministers, —numberless souls, continuing within the visible Church, have perished. And what is the protection against all this anarchy and confusion, but this twofold precept of our Lord: to avoid throughout the bad examples and practices of those in authority, to avoid that which is of man, or of one worse than man, of him who is "the rejecter of laws (*ὁ ἀνόμος*);" and to preserve inviolate that which is of God, viz. that truth and authority which descends from Christ and His Apostles?

SECTION XI

THE WOES DENOUNCED IN THE TEMPLE

OUR Lord now turns to address the Pharisees themselves in words of awful judgment, which seem to anticipate the dreadful voice of His final sentence. The circumstance is the more impressive as being the closing scene of His public ministry, which commences with Beatitudes and ends with Woes; like too many passages of human life, which go forth in promise, and terminate in self-reproach. These judgments are delivered for the non-fulfilment of those things to which those blessings are attached, and describe in most instances the reverse in character. Indeed the woes admit of many points of comparison and of contrast with the beatitudes. They are both given by the same Evangelist alone; they are both eight in number; the former are at the commencement of our Lord's ministry, His first words recorded in public; the other at its close, His last words in public: the one to the poor on a mountain in the humble and retired Galilee; the other to the chief of the Jews in the temple in proud Jerusalem. The one addressed more particularly to disciples, pass from them to a more general discourse: the other from expressions more general, pass to a personal address to Jewish Pharisees. They correspond with the literal Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal of the Law; and with the spiritual Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, i.e. the blessings and imprecations which abound throughout the Prophets and the Psalms. One

part of Scripture sounds in unison with the other; and these both together form links of a chain which reaches forward to the full consummation of the two on the Day of Judgment. "Let them," says Origen, "who dare to deny the goodness of God, on account of the curses which God in His Law hath laid down against sinners, hear, how the true Son of that God Who gave the Law, after the similitude of those blessings which are laid down in the Law, declares Himself the beatitudes of them who are saved; and after the similitude of curses laid down in the Law, lays down woe against sinners, saying," woe "unto you and you." It may further be observed, that the woes as well as the beatitudes contain their first reference to the present state: the beatitudes to Spiritual blessings under the Gospel: the woes to temporal judgments, and visitations on that generation. Yet in both cases such are but earnest of a future judgment.

"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of Heaven before men: for ye yourselves enter not in, nor suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Matt.). No man can stand or fall alone, much less a minister of religion: as no man can go to Heaven but by his good example he will lead others there: so he who by his evil life enters not in, shuts out others also. And as the most blessed of all things, the most like Christ, is to bring others into the kingdom, so they most approach to the character of the evil one who lead others to sin. The kingdom was now proclaimed to all, and Christ was the door by Whom "if any man enter in, he shall go in and out and find pasture." And what was the key (as the expression occurs in St. Luke) which the Pharisees had taken away, but humility? The first of the Beatitudes had declared this, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for

theirs is the kingdom." Nor was it by their lives only that the Pharisees kept out others from the kingdom, but by their doctrines, "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," said our Lord unto them. Their pride led them so to interpret the Prophecies as to keep out others; those that were entering in, the meek and teachable who were disposed to receive the Gospel, were forcibly thrust aside by them.

"*Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye*" (Matt.) ("*which,*" Mark, Luke) "*devour the houses of widows, and for a pretence make long prayers*" (Matt., Mark, Luke); "*therefore ye*" (Matt.), or "*those*" (Mark, Luke), "*shall receive the greater damnation*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). This is what He had long enjoined them by His Prophets, to defend the cause of the widows: but so far from this work of mercy, they greedily preyed upon them; and not this only, but under pretensions of sanctity. Such are they of all ages who make professions of religion to cover crimes; these shall meet with the greater condemnation.

"*Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass the sea and the dry land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves*" (Matt.). What self-deceit is stamped on this eagerness to make proselytes! it cannot be from motives of good; for it is not to make them holier; it is but party spirit and pride which is gratified by increasing numbers. Such proselytes will ever carry out to the fuller extent the wicked principles of their leaders, and develope them in worse actions, increasing the evil tendencies, and neglecting the good: proselytes are ever the more vehement.

"*Woe unto you, blind guides! which say, Whosoever*

shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty." It was their own avarice that thus interpreted; for the Temple and the Altar they cared not, but for the gold and the gift which was vowed they were rigid exactors for their own profit. "*Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Whoso, therefore, shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whosoever shall swear by the Temple, sweareth by it, and by Him that dwelleth therein. And he that shall swear by Heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by Him that sitteth thereon*" (Matt.). They are blind, indeed, and know no better; this does not excuse them, but aggravates their condemnation, for they have put out the light within them, and the things that belong unto their peace are hid from their eyes. Bad, indeed, is such blindness, but still worse not to feel the want of, nor desire the light; and worse than this, being thus blind, to offer oneself as a guide to others. Ye say, We see, "therefore," says our Lord, "your sin remaineth." While they pretend to show the way, having lost the love of God, what is their casuistry but idle superstition? Take the above instance of their traditions, and what are they but subtle refinements, and low carnal distinctions, which would detract from the holiness of the altar, and the temple, and the throne of God?

May we not go on and apply it to their system of making so much of legal external performances, regardless of all purity of heart? Is not the external act but the

gold, which has no sanctity but from the altar on which it is laid? And what is the altar but the heart of the worshipper, from whence his actions proceed? And what is the temple but the body of man, in which God's Spirit dwells;—and Heaven where His throne is, the kingdom of Heaven on earth—the Christian church? If human actions are of such dignity, the gold that is on the altar, of how much more value the altar, the heart itself? with what purity ought it to be revered! and the temple, or the body which He inhabits, is surely worthy of all reverence as His, and the Church in which He dwells. How full of awe and reverence ought we to be—the altar, the temple, the throne of God! and God Himself in the midst of us! Blind, and worse than blind, foolish or depraved in heart, must he be who discerns not in all these God's presence. Eagerness to make proselytes without holiness; making much of lesser matters to the neglect of greater; religious worship without charity; external sanctity without humility of heart,—these are the marks of the Pharisee in every age.

“Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the Law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel” (Matt.). It is all comprised in that one word “hypocrisy,” unsoundness of heart, and a mind void of understanding, which is a slave to superstition when it has lost the love of God; which adheres to little trifles exacted of the Law, while it executes not the judgment of the fatherless, nor that mercy which the Prophet Hosea had told them was better than sacrifice. For deeds of mercy render men meet to obtain mercy of

God ; and lead on to that faith in Christ which realizes the things unseen. But they, while scrupulously particular in little trifles, were without scruple committing great crimes. "He strains all things," says Origen, "who in all that he does and speaks, or thinks, separates what is sordid and earthly, and not filled with Divine reasons, from those things which are lucid, sincere, and just." Let us not do this in order to commit great wickedness.

With regard to the expression of "swallowing a camel," it may be observed, that like many other such phrases in Scripture, as that of "a camel passing through the eye of a needle," and that of "removing mountains," it partakes of the nature of the Eastern proverb, which appears remarkable to us whose tastes are more formed on classical literature, in this respect opposed to that of the East. The latter, from its intercourse with things Divine, ever partakes of what is vast and indefinite ; whereas that which comes from Greece and Rome is definite, finished, clear. The one is more Divine in its character, the other more human.

"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter ; but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also" (Matt.). All the care ye take to appear righteous before men, and obtain their praise, is so far from making you really better at heart, that it renders you the worse within, and more unclean in God's sight ; whereas if you would take care to cleanse your hearts within, by bringing therein the eye of God, and purifying your thoughts as in the sight of Him Who seeth in secret, then would your actions before the world be necessarily just and upright also. By this

proverbial mode of expression from homely life, which our Lord had before made use of at a feast ¹, He sets forth the principle more extensively, and in a way to commend itself to the every-day thoughts and memories of all. To many things would it extend; Origen ² applies it, to the cup and platter of spiritual teaching, to those discourses which are studiously composed, but replete within, not with salutary doctrine, but with the impure dregs of vanity.

“*Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but within are full of dead bones and of all uncleanness. Even so ye outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity*” (Matt.). Like tombs replete with uncleanness, not natural only, but legal also, as dead men’s bones, so are ye full of that which is not only to natural conscience, but also by God’s word stamped as unclean; the uncleanness not of the natural man only, but that which arises from the corrupting and putrefying dregs of past lusts. Such sepulchres find no place in the Holy City, neither can such men in the heavenly Jerusalem. From these and many other like expressions it would indeed appear that the Pharisees did bear a very good and fair character among the people; but to the Lord, who read their hearts, thus amazing was the contrast. Now also, as then, does He, sitting in His temple, read us within. May we avoid that woe! may we be in His sight as temples purified and hallowed for the gracious abode of the New Man, not as whited sepulchres!

“*Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for*

¹ Luke xi. 39. See Ministry, 2nd Year, pp. 178, 179.

² In Matt. Com. Ser. 22.

ye build the tombs of the Prophets, and adorn the sepulchres of the just, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the Prophets. So that ye bear witness unto yourselves, that ye are children of those that slew the Prophets. Fill ye up the measure of your fathers" (Matt.). Fill ye up the measure! it is God Himself that gives them up! It is not imperative, says St. Chrysostom and others, but prophetic. May it not rather be considered as both, like the Word of God in judgment, which foretells because it commands, and commands because it foretells? The mention of ornamented sepulchres in the former woe seems to suggest this also, and perhaps there was some circumstance that gave rise to the expression in both. The difficulty is in the form of expression, for it is not evident how building the sepulchres of the slain should prove them to be the children of their murderers; and therefore some would explain "so that" by "nevertheless." But the very same difficulty occurs when the same thing is stated in St. Luke³, and therefore we cannot consider it as owing to the mere form of expression (ὥστε), "so that," or "wherefore" as it is in our translation. Perhaps our Lord would teach us that in different ages and circumstances, and while espousing opposite parties, the same character is developed; they are children of one another; the same hatred and persecution of what is good, and yet under specious pretence in both. It is in fact only the same mode of speaking which occurs in the former denunciations, as, "Woe unto you, for ye make clean the outside of the cup," and "because ye tithe mint and cummin!" Whereas these were not matters of condem-

³ Luke xi. 47. See Ministry, 2nd Year, p. 182.

nation as taken by themselves, but in connexion with their other actions, which this show of piety greatly aggravated. It may be that the condemnation of the guilty will consist, as was before noticed, in the admission which some parts of their conduct afford that they knew what was good and right; thus they who are rejected at last say, "We have prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name done many wonderful works," though, notwithstanding, they are "workers of iniquity."

It may require explanation, that many of these expressions are the same as, or similar to, those in St. Luke, which seem to have been delivered at another time and place; but this may be accounted for by our Lord's custom of using the same expressions at different times; or it is possible that St. Matthew, under the guidance of the Spirit, both now and in the Sermon on the Mount, puts together under one head things said on different occasions.

Our Lord now comes to speak of the last and closing scene of all, that consummation to which these things must lead, and from which He in vain laboured to save them. "Ye *serpents, ye generation of vipers,*" as the Baptist well called you, as ye partake of the deeds, how can ye avoid the end of that great serpent—how is it possible that such as ye—"how can ye escape the *damnation of hell?*" As they who are saved become the children, and assume the image of their heavenly Father, so are these the children of the devil. Nature itself has been made to supply the image and emblem of you both, in the serpents which she rears. "*Wherefore, behold, I send unto you Prophets, and Wise men, and Scribes; and some of them ye will slay and crucify; and some of them ye will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city*

to city: that on you may come all the righteous blood poured upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias, the son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you" (by the word "Verily" adding solemn asseveration to the "woes" pronounced), "*All these things shall come upon this generation*" (Matt.). It is observable that here our Lord says, "I will send;" whereas in the similar passage in St. Luke He says, "said the wisdom of God, I will send." So that by comparing the two we may see that He is "the Wisdom of God." And in St. Luke it is, "Prophets and Apostles," and not as here, "Wise men and Scribes;" but in both passages it is "Wherefore," as implying a connexion with the former passage of their being children of their fathers. May it be that this expression means, as in the case of all crimes, when God sees the determined bent of the mind, that He sends them occasions which He foresees will develope this in external actions, which are the heaviest of His judgments? For the season of temptation or visitation draws out and developes what was within. These are His visitations when He comes to them in His Prophets and Apostles: and here is fully shown that principle which is so often declared in the Old Testament, that the sins of fathers are visited on children in after generations; for this is the course of God's providence in temporal judgments, i. e. the natural course of this world, which the Old Testament so strongly declares to be God's own immediate dealing with mankind. But with regard to the spiritual and eternal world, He has told us in the Prophet Ezekiel⁴ that it is not so; that each bears alone his own iniquity. But the consummation of all is, here and often, declared in the

⁴ Ezek. xviii.

destruction of Jerusalem, the great type of that final Judgment. The blood of righteous Abel seems to have been the prototype both of Christ's death and also of His Apostles', inasmuch as his murder was from the same cause; for "Wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous⁵." But who this Zachariah was, whom our Lord mentions as the last of the Saints whom they had slain, it seems impossible to determine. Some suppose him the same as is spoken of in the second book of Chronicles⁶, as thus slain "in the court of the house of the Lord," and here mentioned as the last recorded in Scripture of murdered Saints. The objection is that he is "the son of Jehoiada;" but St. Jerome states that he had seen in a Gospel of the Nazarenes the name of Jehoiada in this place, instead of Barachias. Others suppose it the minor Prophet of this name, who was the son of Barachias; this opinion is mentioned by Origen, Chrysostom, and Jerome. But Origen, St. Basil, and Theophylact, also speak of it as considered to be the father of the Baptist, who was said (in the Gospel of St. James) to have been slain in the temple in defending the Virgin Mary. The name, therefore, is in favour of the second supposition; the place of his death of the first; the period, as the last of these murders, with that of the father of the Baptist. If it is the same as is mentioned in the second book of Chronicles as thus slain, it must have been something of a proverbial allusion, or that the statement is confined to the cases spoken of in Scripture; for otherwise we cannot see why it should terminate with this person, when many others were slain afterwards; unless it is that our Lord is speaking only of previous generations to be visited on this. The name of the father

⁵ 1 John iii. 12.

⁶ 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21.

might have found its way into the text from a wrong marginal annotation.

It may be observed, throughout these dreadful declarations, that it is the cause of the widow, of His martyred Saints, and of His Father's honour, that kindles in our Lord the Divine charity which burned forth in these judgments. And now, as previously on approaching Jerusalem He had wept over it, and had broken forth into that most pathetic lament of love and commiseration, so does He take leave of them with a similar exclamation of touching pity and tenderness; and all these His expressions of grief seem connected with the destruction of Jerusalem. "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that slayest the Prophets, and stonest those that are sent unto thee,*" to save thee, "*how often have I wished to gather thy children together, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not!*" (Matt.) The words are nearly the same as St. Luke mentions on a former occasion. We may observe, from the striking figure under which it is expressed, the same Lord, Who endues animals with this tender care of their offspring; and Who doubtless intends, by this touching image of watchfulness in His creatures, to set before us emblems of His own parental care over us against our spiritual enemy. "A bird it is," says Origen, "bearing many young, and so ardent in love for her offspring, that she will give herself up for them." The same Spirit speaks Which taught David to address Him with this allusion, "Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings;" and promised him "He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust." It is the same Lord Who expressed His care for them in the wilderness under a similar, but not the same figure. "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth

abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him⁷." The difference of the figure is very observable: in the wilderness it was the case of an eagle over her young, when as yet unformed and unable to support themselves, as the Jewish nation then was; but this is the action of a home-bird, long reared among domestic habitations, when a bird of prey is near; when the Roman eagle is at hand poised in air for his last attack. Our Lord's expression, "How often have I wished," beautifully describes His paternal and tender expostulations throughout the Law and the Prophets, "His loving-kindnesses, which had been ever of old;" and which will continue to the world's end, while He is gathering together "the children of God that are scattered abroad" before the great Day shall have arrived; "as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings."

"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt.), as He had said by His mourning Prophet, "I have forsaken Mine house; I have left Mine heritage; I have given the dearly Beloved of My soul into the hand of her enemies⁸." As Christ Himself now rises to quit your temple, so also spiritually shall He leave it, His Presence departs from it; your sacrifices and offerings shall be of no avail; your habitation shall be found empty, like the heart of that man was found by the evil spirit, when he returned with seven others to take up his abode there. "For I say unto you, ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord" (Matt.). These words of the Psalmist are those which the multitude used who brought Him to Jerusalem; they are the words which acknowledge Him as the Messiah. From that time to this they have not seen

⁷ Deut. xxxii. 11.

⁸ Jer. xii. 7.

Him, nor shall they till they thus acknowledge Him. But even now, if they repent, they may thus see Him by faith; and some refer the words to this their conversion before His second coming; as if it were, till they come to understand their desolation, and in penitence to mourn over "Him whom they have pierced," and to look for a deliverer from God, they "shall not see the Son of God, nor behold the Word, nor understand the beauty of the wisdom of God⁹." Or it may signify, as St. Chrysostom takes it, that they shall acknowledge Him, though unwillingly, when they shall see Him returning in Judgment; when "every knee shall bow to Him," and "tongue confess Him." It may be observed that the expression "henceforth" (*ἀπ᾽ ἀρτι*) is the same which this Evangelist records afterwards before the Chief Priest, "Henceforth shall ye see the Son of Man sitting at the right Hand of Power¹⁰." In both cases it may imply either the immediate establishment of our Lord's kingdom, or His last coming in Judgment.

SECTION XII

THE WIDOW AT THE TREASURY

THERE is now a circumstance which might have occurred at any time during these days of our Lord's teaching in the temple; but from the place it occupies in the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke, we may well suppose it took place when Christ was now for the last time retiring from the temple, and having already closed His public teaching, sat down in its precincts. It is recorded by St. Luke,

⁹ Origen in Matt. Com. xxviii.

¹⁰ Matt. xxvi. 64.

who seldom omits such an instance of compassion, and by St. Mark, with his own peculiar marks of circumstantial description. "*And Jesus having sat down over against the treasury*" (Mark);—in the same court of the temple where He is described as being¹ on a former occasion, when they brought to Him the woman taken in adultery; whereas she could not have had access to the inner courts of the temple. "*And looking up*" (Luke), "*He beheld how the people cast money into the treasury*" (Mark). "*He saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury*" (Luke). "*And many that were rich cast in much*" (Mark). And among them "*He saw also*" (Luke), "*there came one*" (Mark), "*a certain*" (Luke) "*poor widow*" (Mark, Luke), "*casting in*" (Luke), "*and she threw in*" (Mark) "*two mites*" (Mark, Luke), "*which make a farthing*" (Mark). She must have appeared contemptible, and been despised among that multitude of rich men; and it might have been thought a piece of superfluous superstition to have added such a trifle, so mean in comparison with their affluent contributions; but not so was it in the eyes of the Omniscient Judge, Who weighs all things in the scales of the Eternal Judgment, for the service of Whose House these offerings were made, Who has promised to reward openly the alms that are done in secret. For as He sat down now for the last time in His temple, so the next time that He shall sit will be on the seat of the last Judgment, "In the glory of the Father, and with all the holy Angels with Him;" and shall remember this deed of the poor widow. "*And He called unto Him His disciples*" (Mark), for it appears that His public discourses had now ceased, "*and saith unto them*" (Mark, Luke), "*Verily*" (Mark), "*Of a truth*" (Luke), "*I say unto you, That this*

¹ In St. John viii. 20.

poor widow hath cast in more than they all" (Mark, Luke), "*who have cast into the treasury*" (Mark). "*For they all have cast in of their abundance*" (Mark, Luke), "*into the offerings of God*" (Luke), which were for the Priests, the poor, and the widow, says Theophylact. "*But she of her want*" (Mark, Luke), "*hath cast in all that she had, even all her living*" (Mark, Luke). And thus, though she had given away all her sustenance, and the rich went away in their abundance, yet by this decision of their God and Judge was fulfilled that saying of the Gospel, "He hath filled the hungry with good things," having given her His praise, which is better than life, "and the rich He hath sent empty away," being rendered by their very abundance empty of that honour which cometh from God. St. Ambrose says with great beauty, "The drought hath emptied the casks of the rich, but the little oil-cruce of the widow hath overflowed!"

Thus in the vestibule of His temple, in the house of alms, He that sat in His temple, as the "Refiner and Purifier of silver," hath set the value and marked the nature of eternal treasures. Nor was this incident unworthy to occupy so great a place in the Divine dispensation—that He should call unto Him His disciples, and with them all that would wish to be so from the beginning to the end of time, to set before them this decision of the Eternal Judge. By this action, the forerunner and token of His great Judgment, He points out to them, as in the scales of the sanctuary, the true value of human charity, as it shall be found when "He shall call" unto Him "the Heavens from above, and the earth, that He may judge His people;" when He shall bring His Saints with Him; when these, the Twelve, shall sit with Him, and His disciples shall be His assessors in the Judgment.

Nor was the principle itself one unimportant in human philosophy ; for the great heathen master of ethics, though he considered liberality to depend on the means of the giver, stumbled especially on this point, thinking that worldly riches were in some degree necessary for the exercise of this virtue of liberality, which held a high place in his system of the virtues². Such a doctrine would exclude the poor from this grace. But as Christ has declared His kingdom to belong especially to the poor, it would be strange, indeed, if they were cut off from this great virtue, and the high rewards attached to it ; which appears from this incident is one most perfect among the poor, and more especially in their power. This great principle in morals is thus set forth, more clearly and fully than it could have been by any set discourse or maxims of the philosopher, and, also, is better remembered as a practical principle by people in general. This, then, is the mode of weighing gifts in the treasury of His spiritual kingdom, the lesson written up in His school of wisdom.

What the secret history of this action in the mind of this poor widow may have been, is left entirely to conjecture, whether she had learned this lesson of Divine goodness under the Law, or in the school of natural wisdom, like that other widow of Zarephath ; or whether she had heard our Lord's own Divine words, of treasure laid up in Heaven—of selling all and giving alms,—of manifold more in this present time,—and thus had been led on to depend, like her also of Zarephath, on words of express promise, that “all other things shall be added” to those who “seek first the kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness.”

² Arist. Ethics, lib. iv. 1.

PART III

The Discourse on the Mount of Olives

“And the Glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain, which is on the east side of the city.”

SECTION I

INQUIRY OF THE DISCIPLES

FROM the incident recorded of the poor widow's alms, we may suppose that our Lord, when He had finished His public teaching, still lingered about the Temple, as if unwilling to leave it for the last time, knowing that when He had left it, their house would indeed be desolate. And those His last words, which spoke of her desolation, hung heavily on the ear of His disciples; for although they were in some degree darkly spoken, and they could not comprehend their full meaning; yet, from the words themselves, and from the manner in which they were uttered at the close of all, and as the awful summing up of all the Woes, they could not but catch some general impression and dark foreboding of the fate that awaited the Temple. It was, therefore (as Origen, St. Chrysostom, Hilary, and Theophylact suppose), in consequence of these expressions that, as our Lord was departing from the Temple, they made the

remark on its beautiful structure, as if to express their surprise, or to win His commiseration ; for to them it was connected not only with all their individual and national predilections, but with every hallowed association. So sanctified had it been by the Almighty of old, and their religion in itself so local and bound up with that spot, that they looked upon it with an awful reverence beyond what we can understand ; and that reverence increased by their own piety.

“And Jesus went forth, and was departing from the Temple” (Matt.). *“And as He was now departing out of the Temple”* (Mark). *“And some were saying of the Temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and offerings”* (Luke). It was, indeed, *“His disciples”* who *“came to Him to show Him the buildings of the Temple”* (Matt.). And *“one of His disciples”* attracted His attention, and *“saith unto Him, Master, behold what stones and what buildings!”* (Mark.) *“And Jesus”* (Matt., Mark) *“answered”* (Mark) *“and said”* (Matt., Mark), *“See ye all these things?”* (Matt.) or *“Seest thou these great buildings?”* (Mark.) *“With regard to these things, said He, which ye behold, the days shall come in which”* (Luke), *“verily I say unto you”* (Matt.), *“there shall not be left (here,”* Matt.) *“one stone upon another, which shall not be thrown down”* (Matt., Mark, Luke). The stones themselves were, as Josephus¹ mentions, of a very prodigious size. St. Chrysostom² observes that in his time some parts of the Temple were utterly subverted, which he considered as a pledge that the whole of the prediction would be accomplished ; though it would appear from the remark that it was not so in his time. Maldonatus, indeed, mentions a remarkable circumstance on the authority of Chrysostom, Gregory Nazianzen,

¹ B. J. lib. v. c. 14.

² Hom. lxxv.

and Theodoret, that on Julian the Apostate's attempt to rebuild the Temple, the old foundations were thus subverted, so as literally to fulfil these words, and that by the hands of the Jews themselves, who zealously engaged in the work.

He left that temple to destruction because, as St. Hilary says, "an Eternal temple was being consecrated for an habitation of the Spirit, which was man, through knowledge of the Son, and confession of the Father, and obedience to their commands³." And perhaps (as Origen⁴ considers it) this, which was done with regard to the visible temple, was a type also of His departing from a human soul, when after much teaching and many warnings of His Spirit, pleading within, He departs from it, leaving it to desolation, and then to destruction:—notwithstanding its exquisite structure for His abode, its natural and acquired gifts. Behold, Master, what affections, what knowledge, what powers of thought and reason are here! But when He has departed they will be all overthrown.

From the Temple they proceeded towards their present home at Bethany, and, having crossed the valley of Jehoshaphat, were slowly ascending the sides of the Mount of Olives, which lay between them and Bethany; and in ascending the hill they sat down in contemplation of the magnificent scene which lay behind them. Immediately below them, or rather rising on the eminence over against them, was the Temple itself, with the sun gilding its turrets, and setting beyond it, over that very Mount of Calvary itself on the western side of the city, while the garden of Gethsemane lay more darkly in the valley beneath their feet. But every other object was lost in the grandeur of the Temple itself. Josephus mentions that it was covered with plates of gold, so that catching

³ In Matt. xxv.

⁴ Com. Lat. ad loc.

the rays at sunrise it dazzled the eyes like the sun itself ; and in another place he says, that from its burnished whiteness, between those plates of gold, it at a distance was seen by strangers as if it were a mountain of snow. But the place where our Lord now sat caught the first full view perhaps of the city in this approach ; for on His former entrance, when it had been before stated that He had come to the brow of the Mount of Olives, soon after we read, “as He came near He *beheld* the city, and wept over it.” On both occasions it may have been present to His mind, that the Roman army would be stationed on that very spot. For the Mount of Olives was the position of the tenth legion under Titus. The time and circumstances were such as rendered it the most solemn evening that the world has ever witnessed before or since, when we consider what the words were which had last been spoken,—the scene that was now before them,—and the persons who were now assembled. The occasion was rendered the more so from the circumstance that, after the tumultuous scenes of the day, our Lord was again alone with a few, and those the most favoured of His own disciples. They had been walking perhaps in awful silence, having their thoughts full of our Lord’s last words concerning the destruction of His temple, which added a fearfully impressive character to all that had already taken place, and to His previous teaching, in itself so full of mystery ; listening and waiting perhaps in suspense for some further observation that might drop from His Divine lips, but fearing to ask, and in some degree fearing to hear, what they were most anxious to know ; but at length as they sat to gaze on that Temple, which was the very object of their thoughts, they were invited by the occasion, the scene, their own position, to ask. The unspeakable greatness of the subject can only be equalled by

the simplicity of the Evangelical narrative ; the subject was not only the consummation of all things, but the Speaker was He whose very words are actions and events, for as He speaks, so do all things follow or are created, by the breath of His mouth.

"And as He sat on the Mount of Olives" (Matt., Mark), the very spot was, as St. Peter, who was one of them, tells us in his own Gospel, *"over against the temple"* (Mark), *"His disciples came to Him"* (Matt.), *"and asked Him"* (Mark, Luke) *"privately"* (Matt., Mark); and the same Apostle has informed us also who they were; there were *"Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew."* As the disciples on other occasions came to ask *"privately"* what was said to the multitude, so what had been said in the hearing of the Twelve is here inquired of still more privately by these Four. On account of some reason, doubtless, Andrew also was on this solemn occasion added to the other three; whether it was, as appears very likely, that he was the person to make the observation on quitting the Temple, or whether it had a reference to something in his own future history and death, or whether it was as a reward to his watchful and observant faith. They came, *"saying unto Him"* (Matt., Luke), *"Master"* (Luke), *"tell us"* (Matt., Mark) *"when these things shall be. And what shall be the sign"* (Matt., Mark, Luke) *"when (all,"* Mark) *"these things"* (Mark, Luke) *"shall come to pass"* (Luke), or *"shall be accomplished"* (Mark). *"And what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world"* (Matt). They seem to have alluded to our Lord's last words concerning the Temple, and did not rightly comprehend the full meaning of their own words; nor knew how far our Lord's coming and the destruction of

Jerusalem, or the end of the world, were the same or separate events. But in this their ignorance, or confusion of thought, they were still wiser than the most learned; as they might have supposed from some of our Lord's sayings, that there was some indissoluble connexion between them; though how to separate the type and antitype, the lesser and more full accomplishment, they knew not. Thus they in their ignorance, as of babes, surpassed the wisdom of the wise; thus did they in their ignorance approach unto the knowledge of God, with Whom there is no time, but the interval of a thousand years is as one day. On the contrary, it has been the over-wisdom of critical interpreters which has led them astray in the explanation of it. The chief error in explaining this discourse of our Lord's seems to have arisen from confining too much to one event, that which was spoken of more than one, which seems almost like setting bounds to the Holy Spirit of God. An interpreter indeed may very properly make out one course of fulfilments only; and even ancient writers have so done. St. Irenæus, Hilary, and Origen, apply it rather to the latter fulfilment; St. Chrysostom, whose Commentary is more of a popular nature, explains it with regard to the first fulfilment, at least the earlier part of the description, as far as the twenty-third verse in St. Matthew; but he does not at all limit it to that, but occasionally intimates the other. St. Augustin applies it to both fulfilments. Of course the error in interpretation is, when it is confined to one sense to the exclusion of the other. It may be observed, that prophecies in Scripture not only combine usually many events analogous to each other in the same description, of which the former may be the pledge and warning of the latter and more important; but often use

words strictly applicable to one fulfilment only, and pass from them to words strictly applicable only to the other ; whereby we are led, from what we see and acknowledge in either case, to conclude that the fulfilment will be perfect and complete throughout, even in those points where we cannot discern both interpretations. Thus in the Prophets the references to different analogous events are so intimately interwoven and blended together, that they do not admit of being unravelled ; the return from captivity, the times of regeneration, the Christian kingdom now, and the Christian kingdom hereafter, with numberless analogous events, are often signified by the same prophetic words throughout. The prophecy may be one, but reflected in various events ; as a substance seen on the surface of various mirrors, which are thus made to glass and pourtray but one and the same Providence or Divine purpose. This has been pointed out more fully in another place⁵. This circumstance in prophecy, by which one minor fulfilment is bound up with another, may arise from a necessary analogy in events themselves, whereby the Almighty's dealings with mankind develope themselves from time to time, according to some great laws, which occasion this resemblance. Thus it may be the case that all judgments of God may be but forerunners and types of the great Judgment ; we see enough to infer that these are but parts of a vast system. Moreover, as the disciples' question was in a manner threefold, it may be the case, that these things are fulfilled not only at the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, but also under our present Christian dispensation, which is in one sense the coming of Christ. Thus Augustin speaks of it as "His own Coming through the Church, in

⁵ See Study of Gospels, p. 217.

which He ever comes, even unto the end⁶;" "or the end itself, in which He will appear to judge the quick and the dead;" for our Christian state is described under the same terms. as the future state after the judgment; such as the kingdom of Heaven, and the like. And indeed the very words of their inquiry, as St. Matthew records it, apply in a threefold sense to His spiritual kingdom and Coming. For the question is of three things,—of the destruction of the temple,—of Christ's coming,—and of the end of the world: things not only in themselves distinct, but also so intimately blended with each other, that the words may in some sense be applied to each. Thus the Gospel dispensation is itself the kingdom established on the ruins of the Jewish temple; it is also the presence of Christ; and it is likewise designated as the end of the world, as St. Paul speaks of Christians as those "on whom the ends of the world are come⁷;" and to the Hebrews he uses the very term here found, "now once in the end of the world⁸."

SECTION II

THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS

"*And Jesus answered (and said,*" Matt.) (or "*began to say,*" Mark) "*unto them*" (Matt., Mark), "*Take heed*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*lest any one deceive you*" (Matt., Mark), "*that ye be not deceived*" (Luke). "*For many shall come in My name, saying*" (Matt., Mark, Luke),

⁶ Ep. excix. 25.

⁷ 1 Cor. x. 11.

⁸ Heb. ix. 26.—ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων.

"I am He" (Mark, Luke). Perhaps the word here used, "I am," may mysteriously intimate, what is said of Antichrist, that they shall give themselves out "as God," *"I am the Christ"* (Matt.), *"and the time is at hand"* (Luke), *"and shall deceive many"* (Matt., Mark). *"Go not ye, therefore, after them"* (Luke). Whenever the coming of the Great Day is spoken of, either by our Lord, or by His Apostles, the lesson founded on it is patience; and here our Lord's first caution is against impatience, a state of mind contrary to that of quiet watching and waiting for "the salvation of God¹." It does not appear that either in the times preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, or since, there have been many literally claiming to be themselves the Christ, or who have set up avowedly to oppose Him. Yet St. John bears witness to its fulfilment: "Even now," he says, "there are many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time²." It seems, therefore, as Origen thinks, not to imply any distinct claim or personification of Christ, but a false doctrine coming with pretension as being that of Christ, and arising out of a false exposition of Scripture, and occasionally developed in a particular person, such as Simon Magus, whom St. Hilary and others think this alludes to, who "bewitched the Samaritans, giving out that himself was some great one," and leading them to believe him "the great power of God." These false Prophets are to come "in sheep's clothing," i. e. in the very garb of Him, Who was dumb "as a sheep before her shearers," although "inwardly they are ravening wolves." This seems to indicate that they do not come with arrogant pretensions, until men's minds are, by false doctrine, prepared to receive them; but

¹ Exod. xiv. 13.

² 1 John ii. 18.

then they are to come in a manner quite opposite to our Blessed Lord, having, as characterized by the Prophet Daniel, "a mouth speaking great things," giving it out, "I am the Christ;" whereas it does not appear that our Lord ever proclaimed, "I am the Christ;" but said that it was "revealed by the Father" unto babes: that the Father alone could draw men to the belief; that it was learnt by witnessing His works; it was that which proved the character in mankind. It was the "still small voice" within, the voice of God, and not the voice that crieth in the streets. The loud claim is made by false doctrine. And the practical test given us to distinguish is that of works, "by their fruits ye shall know them." It is by good works that a man comes to the knowledge of great saving doctrines; where, therefore, these graces are perceived, truth in doctrine may be expected; to these graces in others, shown by their works, the heart of a good man is knit, and thus is led by the Spirit to discern true from false Prophets. Another practical command is also given in these cases, and repeated afterwards in this discourse, "Go not after them;" for our "strength" is to be "in quietness and confidence." It may be observed that the coming of these false prophets is often repeated by our Lord, and referred to by His Apostles, as by St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. Jude, as the characteristic of the last times; and the point particularly mentioned is their exceeding "deceivableness;" the prophecy is ever accompanied with words of warning, such as "beware," and "take heed;" that "they shall lead many astray" is twice repeated in this chapter. Indeed, it seems as if the word "many" was emphatically repeated in this prophecy; "*many* shall come in My name;" and afterwards, in the same sentence, "*many* false prophets shall arise," and "they shall de-

ceive *many*," and "the love of *many* shall wax cold." And the reason doubtless is, that the gate of destruction is broad, that "*many* there be who go in thereat;" that "*many* are called, but few chosen." It seems as if a discernment of the truth amidst heresies, and adherence to the truth, notwithstanding this deceivableness, was the very proof of the true Christian; and that, to the Church, heresies served this purpose of sifting the chaff from the wheat; "there must needs be heresies among you, that they who are approved may be made manifest." For although, as Origen says, it is worse to err in doctrine than in life, yet error in doctrine cannot exist without something wrong in the heart and life; nor can saving doctrine be rightly attained and held without purity of hands and heart. The practice, therefore, of every Christian grace and virtue leads to Christ, Who is Himself every virtue in truth and perfection; and every false semblance of virtue or perverseness leads to Antichrist, who is the false semblance of Christ. For a great deceiver is not generally received till the minds of men are prepared to admit him. Thus it is said that "lawlessness (*ἀνομία*) shall abound;" and afterwards that "the lawless one" (*ὁ ἄνομος*) shall be revealed. A consideration of this will explain how it is that the term Antichrist implies (as it has been supposed) both a principle, and also a person in whom that principle is signally developed; for such a person could not be received without a preparation for him in the minds of men. And this is the case not only in the many Antichrists that first came, but also in the full and final Antichrist, of which the others are the shadows that go before. For Antichrist himself will be preceded by a great falling away or apostasy. It is further to be observed, that Antichrist is not only the enemy, but also the counterfeit of

Christ. Every virtue has its counterfeit, which assumes its name and semblance; every truth has its kindred error (inseparable as the shadow from the substance), for every error is but the perversion of some great truth, of which it contains a part. The devil has always imitated the truth and the service of God, as by his sacrifices and temples to false gods, and thus, at last, the Archdeceiver sits in the Temple of God, giving himself out as God. And not only will the evil one transform himself into an Angel of Light, but even into Christ Himself, who is Himself all truth. Origen speaks much to this purpose: "Every discourse," he says, "which professes to expound Scripture faithfully, and has not the truth, is Antichrist. For the truth is Christ, that which feigns itself to be the truth is Antichrist. So, also, all virtues are Christ, all that feigns itself to be virtue is Antichrist: for Christ has in Himself in truth all manner of good, for the edification of men, but the devil has forged resemblances of the same for the deceiving of the saints. We have need, therefore, of God to help us that none deceive us, neither word nor power, from within or from without, professing itself to be Christ when it is His enemy."

"*But when ye shall hear*" (Mark, Luke), for "*ye shall be about to hear*" (Matt.) "*of wars*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*and rumours of wars*" (Matt., Mark), which, in distinction from wars, may signify wars heard of at a distance, or else that state of agitation and alarm which fears even where no fear is: "*and divisions*" (Luke), or internal seditions and commotions which are even worse than open war:—"look to it that ye" (Matt.) "*be not troubled*" (Matt., Mark), "*be not terrified*" (Luke). "*For (all,*" Matt.) "*these things must come to pass (first,*" Luke), "*but the end is not yet*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*imme-*

diately" (Luke). In this encouragement of our Lord is fulfilled His covenant and promise, notwithstanding these heavy tidings, that abundance of peace shall be in His kingdom so long as the moon endureth. For in the midst of these wars the meek shall be "refreshed in the multitude of peace;" "in the world ye shall have tribulation," "but in Me ye shall have peace." "God is our hope and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea. Though the waters thereof rage and swell, and though the mountains shake at the tempest of the same." The Psalms which speak so much of war are supposed to speak especially of the latter days, and to serve as a spiritual shield against Antichrist. St. Ambrose in this place thus beautifully applies the Psalmist's words, "The braver man says, 'Though an host of men were laid against me, yet will not my heart be afraid; and though there arose up war against me, yet will I put my trust in Him.'" But how different is the case with the unbeliever and the Jew! They have rejected Christ coming in His Father's name, and therefore are going after false Prophets and false Christs, coming in their own name. They have chosen Cæsar and Barabbas, instead of the Prince of Peace; and therefore, with Barabbas they have divisions and tumults, and with Cæsar wars and rumours of wars. But the words, "the end is not yet," and the words afterwards, "all these are the beginning of sorrows," seem darkly to intimate that there was another end besides the destruction of Jerusalem, which all these things ushered in. It may be observed, that as Josephus records the abundant fulfilment of all these things in the primary sense; the Revelation of St. John shadows forth the same as to be

again fulfilled in the latter days, in their adequate and full accomplishment.

"Then said He unto them" (Luke), "For nation shall arise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be (great," Luke) "earthquakes in various places, and famines" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "and pestilences" (Matt., Luke), "and troubles" (Mark). "And fearful things, and great signs shall there be from Heaven" (Luke). Adding these things, says St. Chrysostom, He shows that He Himself likewise will fight against them; for, besides wars, there shall be famines also, and the like. St. Chrysostom explains all this part with reference to the former event alone, the destruction of Jerusalem; whereas Origen, writing rather for the spiritual man of these latter days, confines himself more to the higher fulfilment in these times. He considers that the world will be decaying before it "vanishes away," for "the heavens shall wax old as doth a garment;" and that these things, like pains and infirmities in the natural body, will precede its final dissolution. These natural evils, he thinks, will tend to aggravate and excite those bad passions in men, which the wars and insurrections imply. When the salt of the earth shall have lost its savour, and all things become corrupted and dissolved. When they who are the light of the world shall be extinguished, and therefore an universal darkness shall come upon men's minds. Yet even here the forbearance and long-suffering of God is seen in this expression of these things occurring "in divers places." "For not all at once," says Origen, "does God wish to destroy the human race, but judging by parts and by degrees, while famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes are occurring in divers places, He thus among mankind is leaving space for re-

penitance for those who by moderate chastisements are amended and converted unto God. As when sicknesses are commencing, it is possible to apply remedial aids, in like manner as famine and pestilence and earthquakes in divers places are commencing, it is possible to apply corrections to some men, in order to bring them to conversion and faith, and the wisdom of the saints. But if, while these evils are commencing, the holy chastening avails not, famine and pestilences, and earthquakes, will proceed worse and worse, when the abomination of desolation will come forth, and not content with the rest of the world, will establish itself even in the holy place."

All these evils, continually arising, are but the commencement of worse calamities, which our Lord calls sorrows. "*But all*" (Matt.) "*these things are the beginning of sorrows*" (Matt., Mark), or travail pains. This expression of birthpains is the figure with which the sufferings of this present time are spoken of. Of these sorrows our Lord spoke to His disciples, "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish." And St. Paul says of all nature, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in birthpains." St. Jerome indeed calls them the pains of travail before Antichrist is born; but should we not rather, from the above instances in Scripture, and other remarkable passages where the figure occurs³, consider that these, the consummation of all natural evils, are more especially as travail pangs before Christ is formed in His elect, before He has birth in His everlasting kingdom, never again to suffer pain? For the travail pangs our Lord speaks of are to precede the "joy that a child is

³ As Isa. xiii. 7, 8. Micah iv. 9. Gal. iv. 19.

born into the world ;” and St. Paul also speaks of such “in waiting for the adoption of sons ;” of “travailing in birth” “till Christ be formed” in His people. After the likeness of these circumstances that attend His manifestation in the last and great Day, it has always been observed that when afflictions and evils do most prevail, then is Christ most near to be revealed. The principle is so universal, that it might be shown in numberless instances. When Israel was most distressed, then always appeared, from time to time, those Deliverers and Judges who were the types of Him, the great Deliverer and Judge ; and under the greatest pressure of temporal evils, were ever made to the Church the prophecies of salvation : and when the greatest of all evils shall come upon the world, salvation itself shall appear.

SECTION III

SUFFERINGS OF DISCIPLES

“*But look ye to yourselves*” (Mark). For “*then*,” says St. Matthew, “*they shall deliver you up to tribulation, and shall slay you*” (Matt.). This is St. Matthew’s mode of speaking, not by the word “then” implying consequence in time ; for, as Origen remarks, these persecutions took place before those afflictions above mentioned ; and indeed St. Luke had guarded against this misunderstanding by saying expressly, “*But before all these things, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you*” (Luke). This ambiguity of time between St. Matthew and St. Luke may be formed by Divine inten-

tion, and serve to express the age of martyrdom which succeeded the destruction of Jerusalem, as well as the persecution of Apostles which preceded. For "*they shall deliver you up*" (Mark, Luke) "*to councils*" (Mark), "*to synagogues and prisons*" (Luke): "*and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten, and ye shall be set*" (Mark), "*being brought*" (Luke) "*before kings and rulers*" (Mark, Luke). Agrippa, Nero, and Herod, says Theophylact. "*For the sake*" (Mark, Luke) "*of Me*" (Mark), and "*of My Name*" (Luke). This term, "for the sake of Me" and "of My Name," it is that gives the exceeding blessedness to this trial, as in the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are ye, when men shall persecute you for My sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad." And it was fulfilled in these very Apostles, when, on being beaten, they "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name."

"*And it shall turn out to you*" (Luke) "*for a testimony*" (Mark, Luke) "*unto them*" (Mark). The great object of their being brought before kings is emphatically stated; for it might have appeared as if on their suffering and death the Gospel had failed; but it is "for a testimony unto them." It is important to observe how often this bearing witness is mentioned as the very purpose of the Gospel, as it had been of the Law¹. It is to be "preached to all the world as a witness." The disciples are commissioned to proclaim the Gospel to many, merely as witnesses²; the leper healed by our Lord was sent by Him to the priest as a witness: it is spoken of as the especial office of the Church to be as a witness; and of the Holy Spirit Himself it is expressly said, that He shall bear Witness, He is "the faithful Witness:" and

¹ See Deut. xxxi. 21.

² As Luke ix. 5.

of the disciples in the Holy Ghost it is said, "ye also shall bear witness;" many of the best public religious actions have no evident fruits of expediency, but serve as a "testimony." For this is in fact acting with the Holy Ghost, the great Witness, and proceeding onward to the perfection of martyrdom, which is nothing else but the great bearing witness.

It may here be observed, that in this discourse St. Mark introduces some expressions not found in the parallel passage in St. Matthew. The reason seems to be, that St. Matthew mentions the very same things as spoken to the Apostles when they were first ordained ³, and therefore does not repeat them; but some expressions he gives in both places. It may be that our Lord delivered the same expressions on both occasions, as He sometimes does; and there are some instances in which our Lord uses the same expressions with a different reference and connexion, like proverbial principles applicable in various ways. But it appears upon the whole to be more probably one of the numerous instances in which St. Matthew introduces things not in the order of time, but in that of association and connexion of subject; nor does it appear likely that these injunctions and prophecies would have been delivered at that early period of our Lord's ministry; but the commissioning of the Apostles affords the Evangelist a convenient time for introducing the mention of it. To which it may be added, that when St. Mark alters the order in which St. Matthew introduces circumstances, that alteration is usually according to the order of events. Further it is to be noticed, that two of the verses which now occur in St. Mark are not found here in St. Luke, but are found on a previous occasion ⁴, when, in speaking of the sin against

³ Matt. x. 18. 22.

⁴ Luke xii. 12.

the Holy Ghost, these two verses occur, viz., of the Holy Ghost assisting them in that hour when they are brought before magistrates; where the order of association is not very evident, nor on the surface, but it appears to be an allusion to the days of the Holy Ghost, in distinction from the days of the Son of Man. St. Luke, therefore, refers to the subject by introducing here our Lord's injunction, "not to meditate beforehand," but does not insert the whole passage, as St. Mark does, because he had before introduced it. *"And to all nations must this Gospel first be proclaimed. But when they shall lead you away as prisoners, delivering you up, take no care beforehand what ye shall speak, neither premeditate; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye. For it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit"* (Mark). *"Settle it therefore in your hearts not to meditate beforehand to make your defence. For I will give you a mouth, and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to answer, nor to stand against"* (Luke). "When we are brought before judges," says Bede, "for Christ's sake, all our duty is to offer up our will for Christ. As for the rest, Christ Himself, who dwells in us, speaks for us; and the grace of the Holy Ghost shall be given us when we answer." Although this great injunction may have been addressed, in its first sense, to inspired Apostles as such, yet it contains also the force of a Divine precept to us all; for anxious thought and concern, on such occasions of defending God's truth, might have appeared almost a duty, and the advice may be given to prevent this, from our Lord's exceeding compassionateness and tender concern. For if we are forbidden to be anxious for the morrow in the case of temporal wants, and, while we take prudent means for sustaining life, are to do it without faithless anxiety, much more must we do the same also,

when it is the cause of God we have to defend. It is therefore a duty of great moment to the Christian minister and student, that he should do all things, and speak and write, as unto God, and for God ; but that it should be without carefulness. For carefulness is selfishness and distrust of God. Prayer will assist more than much thought in such preparations. Our Lord's bringing the Christian Church out of the earthly Jerusalem, is in so many ways prefigured in His bringing Israel out of Egypt (this Israel now having taken the place of Egypt), that it seems like the injunction of old, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord ;"—"the Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace⁵." In like manner, their being brought before kings for a testimony, seems to correspond with Moses and Aaron bearing witness before Pharaoh. And it is expressly said⁶, that the wonders then wrought were sent to serve the purpose of a memorial in after generations ; so the destruction of Jerusalem, and all those circumstances attending it, in bringing out the spiritual Israel of God, seem intended as memorials to us of God's power ; as also in both cases to shadow forth a future fulfilment of the same.

But an evil greater than all external evils is yet to be mentioned—the want of internal charity ; that last in the catalogue of the "perils" he experienced, which St. Paul mentions, the "perils among false brethren." *"Then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and hate one another"* (Matt.). *"Ye shall be betrayed even by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends. And some of you shall they put to death"* (Luke). *"And brother shall betray brother to death, and father his child ; and children shall arise against their parents, and cause them*

⁵ Exod. xiv. 13, 14.

⁶ Exod. x. 1, 2.

to be put to death" (Mark). "And ye shall be hated by all (the nations," Matt.), "on account of My Name" (Matt., Mark, Luke). When deep principles are actively set afloat, especially if on great and concerning matters⁷, an agreement on those principles is the strongest bond of union among those who hold them in earnest as true and important; the same, therefore, is the strongest cause of disunion among such as differ on those points. This is essential in the nature of things; and therefore, as Bede says, "there can be no firm affection amongst those who differ in faith." And our Lord Himself declares, "he that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." In good men this will be mitigated by charity towards the persons of men, proportionate to that love of the truth, which makes them to hate their principles; and this is the best gift of Him "Who maketh men to be of one mind in an house." But still no bonds of union or disunion can be so great as those which are on matters of faith. The stronger and more close every bond of union is, the greater becomes the injustice, and consequently the hatred and anger (for these passions arise from injustice, real or supposed), when it is broken; and therefore the Christian bond being the most intimate of all, the greater is the violence when these ties are broken. For this reason nothing is so exciting as the stirring of religious principles; the whole mass of society is moved and shaken to the centre when these are stirred; besides which, there is an intrinsic hatred of goodness in the human heart, which ever heightens religious discord. Now if all these things operate in some measure within the Christian fold thus subtilely, how much more without, in those fearful and "perilous times" of which St. Paul speaks, when men

⁷ See Arist. Ethics, lib. ix. ch. vi. ὅταν περὶ τῶν συμφερόντων, &c.

shall be "without natural affection"! This hatred of the world is ever spoken of as the essential accompaniment of every true disciple of Christ, inseparable as the shadow in the sunshine. Therefore it has become an axiom in morals, that "all they who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution;" and the more faithful the Christian is, the greater will be this hatred, as is implied by that saying, "If they have hated Me, they will also hate you⁸." "By how much the more he advances forward," says Origen, "in the manifestation and vision of the Word, by so much the more, since Christ is more perfectly found within him, will he be hated by all who hate Christ." "For the very manifestation which is implanted within him of all those properties that peculiarly belong to Christ, and on account of which he is called a Christian, causes him to be hated by all who have the spirit of the world, as he presses forward still more and more unto the perfection of Christ⁹."

To this our Lord adds in St. Luke, "*And a hair of your head shall not perish. In your patience possess ye your souls*" (Luke). This allusion occurs in another place both in St. Luke¹ and St. Matthew², where on a similar occasion our Lord says, "The hairs of your head are all numbered." The truth contained in these words is the foundation of all Christian courage; which consists in an entire dependence on God, as taking the most watchful and particular care over the very minutest circumstance that can appertain to us; and yet this Divine promise by no means indicates a deliverance from temporal death or suffering; for in this very passage it describes those very persons to whom it is given, as suffering both death and persecution: and in

⁸ John xv. 18. 20.

¹ Luke xii. 7.

⁹ In Matt. 39.

² Matt. x. 30.

the other place where this expression occurs, it is attached to the command, "Fear not them which kill the body." It implies, therefore, that "perfect love" which "casteth out fear"—the fear of temporal death, and all other evil, from the greater fear of Him who after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell. This is, in fact, that faith which is founded on a lively sense of His most intimate presence. It is then very remarkable, and most important to observe, that this, the strongest description of a particular and protecting Providence, implies no release from temporal evils, while at the same time it promises the most assured safety.

Our Lord next proceeds to speak of an evil still worse than the former dangers and troubles, that "deceivableness of unrighteousness" which precedes the coming of Antichrist, and to which men shall be given up, "because they received not the love of the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." *"And many false prophets shall arise and shall deceive many. And because that lawlessness shall abound, the love of the many shall wax cold"* (Matt.). *"But he that hath abided unto the end, the same shall be saved"* (Matt., Mark). *"And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be proclaimed in all the world, for a witness to all the nations, and then shall the end come"* (Matt.). There is abundant testimony to the fulfilment of all these things before the destruction of Jerusalem, as in the history of Josephus, respecting the general troubles, and in St. Paul's life and letters, as an instance of the suffering Apostles. St. Paul's words prove also this preaching of the Gospel in some sense before that event. Thus to the Romans, "Have they not heard?" he says, "yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world;" and to the Colossians, "the word of

the truth of the Gospel which is come unto you, as it is in all the world." Yet this fulfilment is not, of course, according to the greatness and fulness of Divine words, but as a shadow going before, or as a precursory sound of that trumpet which is to call in all to the day of Judgment. For in some sense these predictions were not fulfilled; as our Lord says, on another occasion, that they should not have passed through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man shall have come³; that is, in the destruction of Jerusalem: they could not, therefore, in the most perfect sense, have preached to all the world before that event. Thus Origen says that, in his days, the Gospel had not been preached to all the world, neither to some of the Ethiopians, nor Chinese, nor Germans, nor Britons, and others. Therefore the "end is not yet come" in the higher sense. Here, again, the simplicity of a child would find the truth as well as the most learned, for the most simple hearer considers these words to speak of the last days yet to come, or now passing; for we ourselves witness the fulfilment beyond all conception at the time the words were spoken, viz., the Gospel acknowledged as true and received, but not practically believed, and love decaying. "There will be very few," says Origen, "investigating the truth. But false doctrines and corruptions will loosen even a strong man from the purpose of truth, and will multiply those who have itching ears, speaking lawlessness for their gratification; and so injurious will be the words of many teaching contrary things, that they will cause that fervent love, which had before existed in the simplicity of faith, to grow cold in the comprehension of Divine mysteries and truth. But he who shall be able, seeing all these things, to abide in the first purpose of Apostolical

³ Matt. x. 23.

tradition and Ecclesiastical induction, he shall be saved ⁴." It may be observed how stress is laid on patient continuance unto the end,—“he that hath abided ⁵ ;” and although St. Luke omits the passage, yet in the parallel text in his Gospel this same word occurs, “possess your souls in patient abiding.” The second Epistle to the Thessalonians, in which St. Paul treats of this subject, may be characterized by this expression as its sum and substance, “may the Lord direct your hearts unto the love of God and patient abiding for Christ!” This expression of patient abiding seems to indicate that God’s protection will be most found in that position in which He has placed each ; as is also signified in the injunction, “go not after them,” and the like ; and is especially opposed to that restlessness of mind which characterizes those who take the lead, or are the first to follow, in great religious changes, and is opposed to the humility and peace of true faith.

St. Chrysostom, although he appears to think that the former part only of this description belongs to Jerusalem, yet the sublime eloquence with which he pourtrays it would be applicable to the latter also. “It was,” he says, “as if,—the sea having risen on every side, and darkness possessing the whole sky, and wrecks taking place one upon another, with all the rulers of the vessel quarrelling above, and sea monsters arising from below, and together with the waves seizing on those that sailed, and lightnings coming down, and pirates attacking, and those within plotting against each other ;—He should command men inexperienced in sailing, and who had

⁴ In Matt. Com. 39.

⁵ Ὁ ὑπομείνας, Matt., Mark ; ἐν ὑπομονῇ, Luke ; εἰς ὑπομονήν, 2 Thess. iii. 5 ; εἰ ὑπομένομεν, καὶ συμβασιλεύσομεν, 2 Tim. ii. 12 ; μακαρίζομεν τοὺς ὑπομένοντας, James v. 11.

never seen the sea, to sit at the helm, and govern the ship, and when an immense fleet was coming to the attack with great array, while they had but one little boat of men, thus disturbed, to fight, and overcome, and sink them. For they were hated by Gentiles as being Jews; and were stoned by Jews as persons at war with their own laws. And they had no place to stand. So much were all things filled with precipices, and rocks, and shoals; in cities, and in villages, and in houses⁶."

SECTION IV

THE DAYS OF ANTICHRIST

"When (therefore," Matt.) "ye shall behold" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, standing*" (Matt., Mark) "*in the holy place*" (Matt.), or "*where it ought not,*" as St. Mark explains it to the Gentile, for both expressions may have been used by our Lord, or the latter only as indicating the holy place by a reverential reserve. "*Let him that readeth understand*" (Matt., Mark): implying, no doubt, the depth and importance of the meaning contained in the words; "for the Spirit alone," says Origen, "Who was in Daniel, can comprehend truly his words." But St. Luke, the Evangelist of the Gentiles, mentions distinctly the thing that was primarily meant: St. Austin says, "in order to show that the expression of Daniel had reference to the taking of Jerusalem, he repeats those words of our Lord. '*When ye shall see*

⁶ Com. in Matt. lxxv.

Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know ye that its desolation is at hand'" (Luke). Then shall be fulfilled those last words which our Lord had uttered on His departure from the Temple, that her "house was left desolate¹;" when the abomination of desolation shall be within her, "and unto the end desolations are determined²." "*Then let them who are in Judea flee unto the mountains*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). "*And let them who are in the midst of her depart out; and let them who are in the country not enter into her*" (Luke). "*And let him that is on the house-top not descend*" (Matt., Mark) "*into his house, nor enter in*" (Mark) "*to take any thing out of his house. And let him that is in the field not turn back again to take his clothes*" (Matt., Mark). "*For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled*" (Luke). "*But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!*" (Matt., Mark, Luke.) "*But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter*" (Matt., Mark); and St. Matthew alone, as writing to Jews, adds, "*nor on the Sabbath day*" (Matt.). "This expression," Origen says, "was as speaking to the Jews, who supposed that they ought to do nothing on the Sabbath, nor to walk more than a Sabbath day's journey." And St. Chrysostom observes, "that it must have been spoken for Jews and not for the Apostles, for the latter did not observe the Sabbath." To which may be added, that the Apostles themselves would not be at Jerusalem when taken by Vespasian's army. Perhaps, indeed, it was almost a proverbial expression to denote a flight that required exceeding despatch, as Ovid uses it, "*Nec te peregrina morentur Sabbata.*" Many have shown how very accurately all things were fulfilled

¹ Matt. xxiii. 38.

² Dan. ix. 26.

at the taking of Jerusalem, and the fulfilment of all these was no doubt highly striking and remarkable, although there may be doubts as to what event some of them most strictly applied. As, for instance, whether "the abomination of desolation" was, as St. Chrysostom suggests, the Roman army; or because he who desolated the city placed his statue in the temple; or as St. Jerome says, "the image of Cæsar which Pilate placed in the temple, or the equestrian statue of Adrian which stood in the Holy of Holies:" or as Origen considers it, "the prince who besieged the city;" or whether it had any reference to the Roman eagle. Some have traced out minutely other circumstances, as of the Christians who took this warning to flee to the mountains, crossed Jordan, and fled to Pella to Agrippa. And of course, we doubt not but that the circumstances were as exact as if our Lord's words had been historical and not prophetical. It is easier to see such literal fulfilments than to follow out what higher meanings they may contain; nor, indeed, is such literal fulfilment of itself so important, but being more sensible and palpable, is better calculated for those weak believers who require such evidence.

It is, of course, allowed by all that it has its fuller completion in the great and final Antichrist; but it is far beyond us to conceive in what way it will be accomplished in all its circumstances. Origen suggests that "the abomination standing in the holy place" implies that Antichrist will sit in the temple of the Scriptures, proving by those very Scriptures that he is God. And, indeed, we have seen much of this tendency; for all heresies, and even Socinianism, which has the great mark of Antichrist in denying the Son, seats itself in Scripture; and the Devil, also, in the temptation of our Blessed Lord, quotes

Scripture, transforming himself thereby, as in other manifold and extensive ways, into an angel of light. St. Jerome likewise explains "the abomination of desolation" as any false doctrine taking its station in the Holy place, that is, in the Church of God, and showing itself to be God. And certainly they who look deeper into the causes of things may see why any false principle should be said to make desolate, especially when seated in the Church; in fact no desolation, strictly speaking, can take place, excepting from the setting up of false principles: such is emphatically, peculiarly, and in some sense alone, "the abomination that maketh desolate." This, by a little attentive consideration, may be seen in all history; a principle of good or evil adopted into the polity of any nation, secretly, but more strongly affects its destinies than any mere movements of armies or counsels of politicians. But St. Ambrose explains it of Antichrist taking possession of the soul of man, which is God's temple: "the abomination of desolation," he says, "is the execrable coming of Antichrist, who will contaminate the inner mind with his unhappy sacrileges; sitting, according to the account, in the temple, to claim for himself the seat of Divine Power. And, according to spiritual interpretation, he is beautifully said to 'stand,' in that he desires to establish the footing of his perfidy in the affections of each, disputing from the Scriptures that he is Christ³." It is curious that these last words go on to imply also Origen's interpretation; they may both be true, for if seated in false exposition of Scripture, then likewise in the heart of man; and if such should prevail extensively, then moreover in the Church. All this, therefore, would coincide with those who think that

³ Expos. in Luc

his standing in the temple of God signifies that he will arise from, and sit within, Christ's own Church, like the Scribes and Pharisees, and like Caiaphas and Judas. And indeed, if, as some say, Jerusalem itself is to be rebuilt, it may be that he shall actually sit in the temple at Jerusalem; but such an interpretation is indeed like a returning to the mere letter and lower carnal sense. At all events he is to appear to stand in the Holy of Holies, whether it be in the Church, in the Scriptures, or in the heart of men, or in all these combined. Whatever these may be, certainly it has, in the opinion of ancient writers, some connexion with the name of Rome, and the world has never yet witnessed any thing so wonderful as the Church of Rome, wherein the spirit of ancient Rome and the Spirit of Christ, "the mystery of godliness" and "the mystery of iniquity," seem combined in a manner most inexplicable: the great old serpent imbedded so long in the seven hills, seems therein wreathing his coils, as in a last and desperate struggle, around the New Man; taking the ancient Capitol for his fulcrum, he wreathes around the developments, and endeavours to stifle the breath of the New Man—which is the Power of God—but Who (may we venture to hope?) will finally, even in this instance, "bruise the serpent's head."

But although all these things apply more strongly to the immediate coming on of Antichrist, they may refer also to the risings of various Antichrists before that time, as in the days of Elijah. "Then you will find," says St. Ambrose, "the prophets of confusion, then Jezebel, then famine, then drought. Why? For iniquity had abounded, love had waxed cold. In fine, the just man is in the desert, the unjust in the kingdom⁴." And I

⁴ Expos. in Luc.

think we may conclude from our Lord's words in other places, that His warnings refer also in some sense to the whole period of the Christian dispensation, as the days of the Son of Man ; although we may be unable to follow out the particulars. It may be difficult, for instance, to ascertain what may be the full meaning of "fleeing to the mountains," whether it may be the same as fleeing to the wilderness, for we find the wilderness signifying the same as the mountainous country ; and if so, whether it may have any reference to the woman in the Revelation⁵ who flies to the wilderness, and is there sustained from the face of the serpent. If this be the case, some allusion to this may be intended in the expressions of the Psalmist, "O that I had wings, like a dove, for then would I flee away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I get me away far off, and remain in the wilderness. I would make haste to escape, because of the stormy wind and tempest." So Moses and Elijah, and John the Baptist, found refuge in the wilderness. And if we come to the particular expression of the mountain, we find the Angel says to Lot, "Escape for thy life ; look not behind thee ; escape to the mountain." And thus, as a general precept, we are told that we are to "remember Lot's wife," and not to look back ; but that, seeing the impending destruction, we are to flee as it were, like Lot, to the mountains. And the Psalmist says, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help ;" that the "foundations" of our spiritual Jerusalem are "upon the holy hills." Yet further, with reference to this despatch, we are told that he who has put his hand to the plough is not to look back,—that "he who loves his life shall lose it ;" we are not to be entangled by secular cares, or bind ourselves to

⁵ Rev. xii. 14.

this life. And this St. Ambrose would explain to be the meaning of the warning, "Woe to them who are with child, or who give suck in those days!" that we are not to be hampered by temporal sorrows or joys. Thus also St. Austin would interpret the warning, "that your flight be not in the winter, nor on the Sabbath day;" and St. Hilary would take it not unlike this. So that the lesson intended in both of these cases is what St. Paul says, as a general precept to us all, "the time is short, it remaineth that they who have wives be as they who had none; and they that weep as though they wept not, and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not, and they that buy as if they possessed not." For our flight out of this spiritual Egypt, which is the world, and in the night of Antichrist, must be "in haste," so as not to be impeded by domestic affection, as they who have children, nor with temporal sorrows, as in winter, nor by rest, as on the Jewish Sabbath, nor taken up by merchandise, as they who return to the town, nor in planting, as he "who is in the field;" who must not turn back to take that which he has left. But in all these things the Christian must be as one engaged, and yet not engaged; as one at rest, and yet not at rest; which is signified in St. Luke by the "two men in one bed," "two women at a mill," "two men in the field," of which one shall be taken and the other left. And thus we are told that in the last days men will be overtaken as in the days of Lot, when absorbed in these things, marrying and giving in marriage, buying and selling; and so will not escape unto the mountain.

St. Hilary gives another turn, mystically, to the expressions of "being with child" and "giving suck;" he says that it is not to be taken literally, but as a description of souls burdened with the weight of sin; or which are as

babes in the ways of righteousness. Origen also thus spiritually interprets it, "that the soul with child by the Word, not yet having brought forth, is liable to a woe; and the same also if the Word hath been brought forth, but not attained sufficient growth." The same writer beautifully comments on the words of praying that our "flight be not in the winter." "If at any time a storm shall descend and bring winter, let a man pray and awaken Christ by his prayers, that he may command the wind and the sea, and there being a calm, he may renew his flight, so that he may not be overtaken by fornication or avarice, or vain glory, or by any evil that pursueth him, or by the abomination of desolation itself, that is, by false doctrine."

May we indeed ever remember that our Christian state itself is in Scripture thus compared to a flight; that we are ever to be with loins girded, and staff in hand, and shoes on our feet, hastening as the Israelites of old to escape from the pursuit and the doom of Egypt. Thus St. Jerome also, although he explains it first of all to the very letter, as fulfilled in the taking of Jerusalem by Titus and Vespasian, yet spiritually interprets it of the latter days; that our faith and charity do not grow cold, and that we rest not and be not slothful in the works of God. And Theophylact, that we must avoid sin fervently, not coldly and quietly. Thus throughout, these warnings of our Lord will apply to all the days of Christianity; "the days will be shortened," for when we are unable to bear it, He "will not tempt us beyond what we are able," but "as our days are, so shall our strength be." Again, in these our times we have every shape of schism and of heresy, saying, "Here is Christ, and lo, He is there;" and we are told not to go forth after them, for that Christ

is from east to west, not in a corner, but in the Church Catholic of all times and countries. "If any one promises you," says St. Jerome, "that Christ is in the school of the Gentiles, or in the secret place of heretics, believe it not, for the Catholic faith shines like lightning from east to west." Add to which, His Angels or ministers are even now collecting His elect from the four quarters of the globe; and "this generation" (this dispensation, as we may understand it) shall continue till all be fulfilled. We may, I think, infer that all these things will bear an application to Christians of all times; for some of the warnings are clearly addressed to all of all times. And our Lord adds emphatically at the close, "What I say unto you I say unto all;" which seems to indicate this general application of it to all Christians from that time to the end of the world. Thus also it becomes an answer to the very words of the Apostles (in another sense besides the two more obvious ones), "when shall these things be?" When shall Thy coming (or presence) be? And when the end of the world? For this dispensation in which we live is the kingdom of Heaven, is the presence of Christ, and is the end of the world. But all these things were fulfilled in that generation, then passing, of the Jews; for the first fulfilment is that most definitely pointed out; the other senses are more lost from view in the mysterious and unknown counsels of God.

"For then" (Matt.) or "those days" (Mark) "*shall be (great,*" Matt.) "*tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning*" (Matt., Mark) "*of the world*" (Matt.), "*the creation which God hath made*" (Mark) "*until this present time, neither ever shall there be. And unless*" (Matt., Mark) "*those days had been shortened*" (Matt.),

"the Lord had shortened the days" (Mark), "no flesh should have been saved ; but on account of the elect" (Matt., Mark) "whom He hath chosen, He hath shortened the days" (Mark), "those days shall be shortened" (Matt.). "For there shall be great distress on the earth and wrath on this people. And they shall fall by the edge" (or "by the mouth," as the Greek has it from the Septuagint) "of the sword, and shall be taken captive into all nations. And Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled" (Luke). It is remarkable, that not only are the Jews themselves the unconscious instruments, but a Jew is also made the unconscious witness of the fulfilment ; for it is a Jew that has handed down the destruction of Jerusalem, and of all these things being fulfilled in the siege ; the siege being Providentially shortened ; false Prophets showing signs and wonders ; some escaping to the mountains ; the advantage taken of the Sabbath by the enemy ; the suddenness of the vengeance ; the Roman eagles surrounding the dead body of Jerusalem. And well indeed might that tribulation be the greatest of all tribulations, inasmuch as that crime was the greatest of all crimes, which laid sacrilegious hands on the Lord's Anointed. For it can only be exceeded by that last consummation of apostasy, when they shall have crucified afresh the Lord of life, and "counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and done despite unto the Spirit of grace." For when the Holy Ghost is rejected in His dispensation, then is there no more pardon ; no more pardon in that generation, for wrath came upon them to the uttermost ; no more in the Christian one, which now is ; for when the world hath rejected the teaching of the Spirit, as Jerusalem did, then will the world, like Jerusalem, be at

an end. That the prediction was not beyond the known facts in the first case, the account of the Jewish historian proves; for he uses almost the same words, "if the misfortunes of all from the beginning of the world were compared with those of the Jews, they would appear much inferior on comparison." And St. Chrysostom observes, that "this is not overstated the history of Josephus proves, himself a zealous Jew; and let the Jews be asked if these things did not come upon them, and to what they attribute the anger of God; for they were greater evils than had ever been witnessed either before or after." The expression that "no flesh should be saved," he interprets to this effect; that "if the Roman siege had continued longer no Jew would have been saved either in Judea or in the rest of the world, so hot was the persecution against them; but for the sake of the Christians it would be shortened⁶." But Theophylact takes it, that no Jew would have been saved but for those among the Jews who would afterwards believe. If God remembered the intercession of Saints in the Old Testament, and spared nations for their sakes, even now may it be supposed that the intercession of Christians would have power. Although it was perhaps in anticipation of those days that He had declared before, that if Noah, Daniel, and Job had interceded for them, He would not have spared them. But what God does, He does for the sake of the elect, as they represent Christ Himself, for Whose sake all men are saved; for the salvation of His elect, and for the sake of His elect, will those days be shortened, lest the trial should be for them too exceeding great; but when it is at its height, then shall Christ appear. "Then," says St. Ambrose, "shall come the day of the Lord, and the days

⁶ Hom. in Matt.

shall be shortened on account of the elect ; for as the first coming of the Lord is to redeem from sins, His second is to stop crimes ; that too many may not fall from the error of infidelity⁷."

We may well suppose that at such a depth of perplexity and distress men should catch at any hope that superstition or religion might suggest ; and that the evil one, availing himself of the excited fears and hopes of mankind, should supply false pretenders to delude them, and invest them with all his powers of deceiving. And this our Lord now proceeds to mention, and the warning He here so emphatically gives is one which He now repeats for the third time in this discourse, dwelling on the exceeding deceitfulness of these false prophets. And perhaps His threefold mention refers to three different periods, when "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse." And it is to be observed, that He had repeated the same things on another occasion, as mentioned in the seventeenth chapter of St. Luke, in connexion with other circumstances, but all looking to these times ; but having a still more distinct and awful reference to the last days and the end of the world. "*Then if any shall say unto you, Behold, here is the Christ, or (behold,*" Mark) "*He is there ; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs and false Prophets, and shall show (great,*" Matt.) "*signs and wonders ;*"—"for then shall Satan be unchained," says St. Augustin, "and work through Antichrist in all his power wonderfully indeed, but falsely ;"—"*so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect*" (Matt., Mark). "*But take ye heed*" (Mark): "*Behold, I have foretold you*" (Matt., Mark) "*all things*" (Mark). "*If, therefore, they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the*

⁷ Expos. in Luc.

desert, go not forth; behold, He is in the secret chambers, believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together" (Matt.).

What we know, therefore, of Antichrist, is this, that there were many in Apostolic times, but that there will be more, far worse and more bitter, as St. Chrysostom says, before Christ's last coming; that these are but forerunners of the one and chief Antichrist; that the word applies to false doctrines, and also to persons; that so in the last case there will be an Apostasy in men's minds, and then the great Apostate, to whom they will give heed on account of this Apostasy in their own minds: that these Antichrists are exceedingly deceivable, "coming with all deceivableness of unrighteousness," and will "deceive many:" for (as Origen adds) "broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:" that they come with great pretensions; that some will establish themselves in the Scriptures, giving them a private interpretation of their own; others will be without, and independent of Scripture: that they will differ from Catholic Truth in their being confined to particular times and place, and not found in all time and in all place: that not only will they come with great pretensions, but will at last work great signs and wonders; but above all, that they will in some sense or other stand in the Holy Place, where they ought not. The whole description is the more remarkable when compared with the similar passages above alluded to in St. Luke, which seem to come out in a different, but often a more clear and extensive sense. Thus there the expression, "they shall say, Lo, He is here, and lo, He is there," is connected

with their unquietly looking out for some external sign of the kingdom; and it is added, "for the kingdom of Heaven is within you;" where it seems, with different connexion and reference, the same advice is given, viz. "Go not after" those who say that Christ is here or there. Hence it appears that it is the first step in joining heresies and schisms, which is the important and criminal one; for on account of their exceeding subtlety, safety is thus lost, and the Divine protection forfeited, when once men, led by a criminal curiosity, the first step of evil, "go after" them. It is remarkable that they are to come, not only with semblances of virtue and truth, but also with great signs and miracles; like the magicians in Egypt and Simon the sorcerer. For miracles are sometimes given us as the test of Divine truth: sometimes false are allowed, in order to try and prove the faithful. But it must be observed, that to be demanding signs is a proof of an adulterous and corrupt heart, and that true faith (although inclined to credulity) yet has the power, by means of continual inference and induction, of discerning true from false miracles; but here it is spoken of as very difficult, so as almost "to deceive even the elect." And the safety is in the Church Catholic, as here described, or in Christ appearing from east to west: a description which seems to indicate that the truth will come to us in the way of duty, rather than that we should go out to seek it; for such is the lightning, it is all around us, but not to be sought for by us, encircling us with God's judgment, or the sense of His protection, in the path that we go. That the faithful will have that within them which, amidst "lying wonders," will apprehend the true faith, is indicated in these words: "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,

and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you."

It may be observed that this claim, "Behold, here is Christ," or, "I am Christ," is mentioned before in this very description; but, perhaps, in the former instance it is more referring to the earlier fulfilment, before the fall of Jerusalem. Such pretensions appear to be but various developments of that universal principle, which Bishop Butler has observed, that no evil is attempted in a public way but under the pretext and plea of good. It is not evident what is intimated by the expression of "in the desert" and "in the secret chambers:" it is probable that, even in this case also, it is an imitation and semblance of some characteristics of the truth. Perhaps there is some allusion to Elijah in the desert, and Elisha among houses of men, or in "the little chamber" made for him by the Shunammite⁸: or to such circumstances in the history of other Prophets, as Ezekiel, to whom it was said⁹, "Go, shut thyself within thine house." And Moses was called up into the mountain; and to Zion it is said, "Get thee up into the mountain," to look out for the coming of the Son of Man; and by Jeremiah, "Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place." Or as Elias is to prepare the way,—or the spirit and power of Elias,—by the practice of mortification and a severe life, to prepare men for Christ's coming, it might signify the counterfeit appearing in the garb and semblance of an unreal austerity. For it is commanded the Christian to "flee unto the mountains," to avoid frequented places and the contagion of Antichrist, by retire-

⁸ 2 Kings iv. 10.

⁹ Ezek. iii. 24.

ment ; but at the same time it is said of the false claim "in the desert," go not after it. It is also said that the kingdom cometh not with observation, for the kingdom of God is within you ; and yet the false claim is "in the secret chambers," in the visions, we may suppose, of falsely-inspired enthusiasts. Origen, however, explains it differently ; he interprets "the holy place," in which Antichrist is to stand, as the Scriptures ; and in the same way of interpretation, the expression "in the desert" he applies to those who have some unreceived Gospel of their own ; "in the secret chambers" to a heresy which quotes the canonical Scriptures. St. Jerome would consider "the desert" as the schools of the Gentiles ; and "the secret chamber" as heresy within the Church. It would at all events signify some claims of schism and heresy in distinction from that light from the east to the west, the Catholic truth founded on the rule of Vincentius by universality of time, place, and persons. *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.* It seems to imply one consenting voice of the whole Church, and also one consenting voice of the whole of Scripture. "I think, therefore," says Origen, "that wishing to show those discourses which are altogether external to Scripture, He said, 'If they shall say to you, Behold, He is in the desert, go not forth,' from the rule of faith. But wishing to point out those who pretend the Divine Scriptures to support a schism, He hath said, 'If they say unto you, Behold, He is in the houses, believe it not.' Whatsoever they profess to you of the Scriptures, and the mysteries which are set forth in them, believe not what is spoken. For truth is like the lightning that goeth forth from the east, and appeareth even unto the west ; such is the truth of the Church of God. For from that alone 'hath the sound gone forth

into all lands, and its words unto the ends of the world ; and the truth of God alone truly ‘runneth very swiftly.’” Applying this rule to Scripture as well as to the Church, he says afterwards, “we ought to know also that the brightness of Truth does not appear in any one place of the Scriptures ; that is, whether of the Law, or of the Prophets, or of the Evangelists, or of the Apostles’ writings. And this brightness of truth going forth from the east, that is, from the beginnings of Christ, appeareth even unto the dispensation of His Passion itself, in which is His setting. And to this brightness is the coming of the Son of Man like, that is, the Word of Truth.” And again, speaking of the Church, he says, “We ought not to attend to those who say, ‘Behold, here is Christ,’ but do not show Him in the Church, which is full of brightness from east even unto west, which is full of the true Light ; which is ‘the pillar and ground of the truth ;’ in the whole of which is the whole of the coming of the Son of Man, saying unto all, who are in every place, ‘Behold I am with you always, even unto the end of the world’¹.” St. Augustin explains it in a similar way : “When the authority of the Church is set up clear and manifest throughout the whole world, He suitably warns His disciples that they should not believe schismatics and heretics ;” and the secret chambers or desert he explains as “the obscure and lurking conventionalities of heretics.”

The next expression² of “the carcase” and “the eagles” appears, like many of our Lord’s expressions, to be an application from the Old Testament ; for Job, speaking of the eagle, says, “Where the slain is, there is she.” The interpretation given to this figure is such, that we should never have ventured so suggest it without great and

¹ Com. in Matt. xlvii.

² See Study of Gospels, p. 79.

extensive authority. But there is something like a consentient voice of antiquity for explaining "the carcase" as the Body of Christ, and "the eagles" as His Saints ; such as are borne above earth, and, by a sort of instinct beyond and above reason, fly to "the Slain," or to Christ Crucified ; and this in every sense in which the term Christ Crucified may be taken, whether as applied to the doctrine of Christ, or to the Eucharist, of which it is said, "My Flesh is meat indeed ;" or to His Body, which is the Church ; or to His Body on the Last Day, when His Saints shall "meet the Lord in the air." It may, therefore, best be taken in none of these senses exclusively, but in all together ; and indeed one sense can scarcely be used without implying the other also in some degree, for they will not thus meet Him who are not now carried above earthly things in heavenly affection ; they cannot have life who do not come now to Christ Crucified ; and the resurrection of our bodies is supposed to be connected with the Eucharist. In some one or more of these senses it is taken by St. Irenæus, Origen, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Jerome, Gregory, Bede, and others. But Theophylact does not confine the eagles to Saints, but to all men, who must meet, and behold, whether willingly or not, Him Whom they have pierced. The extraordinary instinct in birds of prey, by which they gather together from all quarters, even from beyond seas, to where a carcase falls, has often been observed as if it were something not to be explained and supernatural ; and it appears to be nature's emblem of the manner in which, beyond all that can be accounted for by human reason, the good of all ages and countries flock together around the Body of Christ Crucified.

Origen speaks of it thus. After explaining the lightning to be the Truth in the Catholic Church, he proceeds :

"And wheresoever, according to the dispensation of His Passion, is the Body of Him who hath fallen, in order that He might raise up those who had fallen, there shall be gathered together His disciples, not of any kind, but such as are eagles. Of whom also the Prophet hath said, 'They shall mount with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint'.³ And observe that He hath not said, Where the carcase shall be, there shall the vultures or crows be gathered together; but wishing to show that all who have believed in the Passion of the Lord are magnificent and royal ones, He hath said particularly, 'Where the Body is, there also shall the eagles be gathered together'.⁴" And St. Chrysostom more than once uses a similar expression: "For eagles," he says, "not daws, have a right to this table. Those also shall then meet Him descending from Heaven⁵." St. Jerome, in like manner, says, "If birds of prey can scent their food at such a distance, how will not the good hasten to the crucified Body of Christ?" And of the eagles he says, "they whose youth is renewed as eagles, that they may obtain wings and fly to His passion⁶." But Gregory, with great beauty, in words that may apply to the present state or to the Last Day, explains it of Him Who sits Incarnate on the throne of Heaven, raising us to Heavenly places.

It is perhaps on this account that God is represented as carrying His own "on eagles' wings⁷." And that the Church herself is described as having eagle's wings. "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where

³ Isa. xl. 31.

⁴ Com. in Matt. xlvii.

⁵ 1 Cor. Hom. xxiv. See Ox. Tr., with note.

⁶ Aur. Cat.

⁷ Exod. xix. 4.

she is nourished . . . from the face of the serpent⁸." St. Hilary has a still further and remarkable thought: "That we may not be ignorant even of the very place where He will be, He says, wheresoever the Body is, there will the eagles be gathered together. He hath called His Saints 'eagles,' from the flying of the spiritual body; and shows that this their assembling together at the gathering of Angels, will be in the place of His passion. And the coming of His brightness may rightly be there expected, where He hath wrought for us eternal glory by the suffering of His bodily humiliation⁹." It will be observed that the interpretations of both these passages apply them to the dispensation of the Gospel generally, and do not limit them to one Coming of Christ alone. There being three Comings comprised in the disciples' question, our Lord's Presence to establish His spiritual kingdom on the destruction of Jerusalem; His Presence now in His Church to prepare His Elect; His Presence at the Last Day. But of course all these things, in their fulness and most substantial reality, apply only to the last fulfilment, and to the others merely as preparatory and typical, as visible pledges and earnest of the same; that the Coming of Christ will then be as the lightning all over the world at one time; and that the Saints, having their strength renewed like eagles, shall meet Christ in the air, bearing in His Body the marks of Him that was Crucified, and then shall for ever be with the Lord. The words of St. Chrysostom beautifully express this: "When the lightning appeareth, it hath no need of messenger or herald, but to those who sit in the house, and to those who are in the chamber, in a moment it will appear throughout the world. So will be that Coming, appearing at the same time in every place,

⁸ Rev. xii. 14.

⁹ In Matt. ad loc.

on account of the brightness of glory. Another sign He speaks of, where the Body is, there will be the eagles: He signifies the companies of Angels, Martyrs, and Saints."

SECTION V

THE SON OF MAN COMING

"But in those days" (Mark) *"immediately"* (Matt.) *"after (that,"* Mark) *"the tribulation"* (Matt., Mark) *"of those days"* (Mark) *"there shall be signs in the sun, and moon, and stars"* (Luke); *"the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of Heaven"* (Matt., Mark) *"shall fall"* (Matt.), or *"be falling away"* (Mark). *"And on the earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear and expectation of those things that are coming on the earth"* (Luke). *"For the powers of the Heavens shall be shaken"* (Matt., Mark, Luke). *"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn"* (Matt.). These signs in the Heavens which are to precede the Judgment are, we know, frequently spoken of in Scripture: as where Isaiah says, "Behold the day of the Lord cometh . . . the stars of Heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine¹." And the Prophet Joel, "The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble; the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their

¹ Isa. xiii. 9, 10.

shining²." And again, "I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke; the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come³." And it is said of the red dragon in the Revelation, that "his tail drew the third part of the stars of Heaven, and did cast them to the earth⁴." And "the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of Heaven fell upon the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind: and the Heavens departed as a scroll⁵."

It may, indeed, be the case that these are figurative expressions, and that as our Lord's first coming was described as "every mountain shall be made low, and every valley shall be exalted," words which were intended in a spiritual sense, so may, also, these which describe His second Advent. For by an interpretation analogous to that on the former occasion, it might be said that the sun signifies Satan or Lucifer, whom our Lord "beheld fall as lightning from Heaven⁶," and that the stars represent all high things which exalt themselves against the knowledge of God, which at the exceeding virtue and brightness of that Cross shall be consumed and vanish. Origen interprets it in a way of this kind; and indeed ancient writers generally attach to it some mystical exposition; but more frequently take the Heavenly luminaries in a good sense. In this manner St. Ambrose would explain it, that the moon is the Church, which will then borrow no light from Christ, who is her Sun, being eclipsed by the earth, i. e. by carnal desires intervening. They will not be able to

² Joel ii. 10.³ Joel ii. 30, 31.⁴ Rev. xii. 4.⁵ Rev. vi. 12—14.⁶ Luke x. 18.

see the Sun, for faith will fail. The love of life in persecution generally excludes the light of God. And the stars, under the figure of which the faithful were described to Abraham, shall lose their influence and cease to give their light, the Saints being no longer regarded. So St. Ambrose interprets it. St. Augustin also seems to suggest that the Church and the Saints will be eclipsed, and scarce visible on earth, from the darkness of those days of Antichrist. And indeed this explanation of the sun being darkened might be implied in the Revelation, and "he opened the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit⁷:" where the smoke out of the pit darkening the sun seems a figurative description. And indeed we know from other passages, that "the faithful" will be "minished from among the children of men;" that that Day will come "as a snare on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." And there seem some sort of indistinct intimations that those who should be "the lights of the world," the ministers of religion, will themselves fail. Thus, when Moses descended from being with God on Mount Sinai, the Priesthood and people had fallen from the true God; and when our Lord came down from the Mount of Transfiguration, the very disciples had failed in faith. And in a mournful and prophetic inquiry it is asked, When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith upon earth? Moreover, it may be added, that the Resurrection of the Saints is itself to be in some wonderful way as the stars, "they shall shine as the stars⁸," and "as the sun;" they shall be "as the stars in multitude⁹;" and "as one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the

⁷ Rev. ix. 2.⁸ Dan. xii. 3.⁹ Gen. xxii. 17.

dead¹." It is also said in Isaiah², "Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold." If, therefore, there is to be this rekindling and increase sevenfold of the celestial luminaries, after some mystical and Divine manner, the foretold extinction of them also may in some sense have a figurative and emblematic fulfilment.

But of course allowing that these and such like mystical interpretations may be intended, it does not follow on that account that they are not literally fulfilled also. Nor do late discoveries of the vastness of the Heavenly bodies in any way diminish this probability; for we know not what it is for Christ and God Himself to "come out of His place" in order to judge the world: that the most distant and vast of the visible worlds should be moved, may not be beyond that dreadful and great occasion, as well as all the Angelic hosts of the highest Heavens. Besides which, Divine words and prophecies are always fulfilled beyond and surpassing man's thoughts. To which it may be added, that the Heavens vanishing away on the Day of Judgment, as well as the earth, is constantly spoken of in Scripture as an assured and literal certainty; and the new state of things then introduced is described as "the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," which indicates that the present heavens and earth will pass away. And, moreover, there is the same difficulty respecting the account given of the creation of those Heavenly bodies, whether the description is to be taken literally or not, for they are spoken of as in a manner coeval with the earth, or created on the fourth day of the world. But on this occasion of the Great Day and God appearing,

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 41.

² Isa. xxx. 26.

their vastness, so far from being inconsistent, is quite agreeable to, and in keeping, so to speak, with the occasion. And it may be observed that even in our Lord's humiliation the elements knew and acknowledged Him,—the star at His birth, the sun at His death, the sea on which He walked, rocks rent, earth trembling, winds calmed at His word, powers of nature and evil spirits,—all these acknowledged Him, more than man did, even then. Much more, therefore, at His visible manifestation as God shall the Heavens and the earth and all the elements acknowledge Him. What may be the immediate occasion of these supernatural changes, it is, of course, quite beyond all possible conjecture. Some, as we find from Origen, have supposed, that as on the kindling of great fires darkness is wont to arise, from the great body of smoke that ascends; thus, when the world is about to be consumed by fire, the great luminaries of Heaven will be extinguished or hid from view. Others imagine that it is from a kind of natural waning and failing of the earth and Heavens, as from old age and decay. But at all events, there appears great authority for attributing it immediately to the glories of Christ's coming; as St. Hilary says, and as Origen, Chrysostom, St. Jerome, Theophylact, and others explain it more distinctly, by "the sign of the Son of Man," or the Cross in the Heavens, appearing beyond all the brightness of the Heavenly bodies, so as to extinguish them, as the sun does the stars. "At mid-day," says St. Paul, speaking of Christ's appearing to him, "I saw a light from Heaven, above the brightness of the sun³." And if the sign of the Cross had such effect in the first ages of a stronger faith to work miracles, over-

³ Acts xxvi. 13.

coming thereby the powers of nature, and the use of which has always been accompanied in the Church with the giving of supernatural grace, as in Baptism and the like; we may well suppose that this sign visibly displayed in the Heavens should, from its exceeding virtue, eclipse the sun and the stars, whether these expressions be taken literally or figuratively. But as the sun was literally darkened at the sight of that very sign at our Lord's Crucifixion, this appears a sort of indication that when the same sign appears, not on earth, but in the Heavens, exalted and set on high in Heavenly might, that the same luminary will be extinguished. For as at our Lord's dying voice the Saints that slept arose, as in prelude of His next loud voice—so the temporary darkening of the sun seems a prelude also to its extinction at that sign in Heaven. Something of this kind seems implied in the description of Isaiah⁴: “And they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously.”

It seems generally allowed by ancient writers that a literal fulfilment is here intended, as well as the mystical. Thus Theophylact says, “After the coming of Antichrist the frame of the world shall be changed, for the stars shall be obscured on account of the abundance of the brightness of Christ.” And so also St. Chrysostom: “He says not merely ‘after the tribulation of those days,’ but ‘immediately after;’ for they will be

⁴ Isa. xxiv. 22, 23.

almost all together. The false prophets and false Christs will come and create troubles, and He Himself will be immediately present. The sun will be darkened, not destroyed, but overcome by the greater light of His presence. And the stars shall fall: for what use will there be of them when there shall be no more night? And the powers of heaven shall be shaken: and very reasonably, for if when the foundations of the world were laid, they thrilled with wonder, when 'the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy'—much more when they behold all things being fashioned anew, their fellow-servants being brought to account, and the universe standing before the terrible tribunal, and all, who have been from Adam to the time of His coming, about to answer for what they have done,—how shall they not shudder and be moved!" Of the sign of the Son of Man appearing in Heaven, the same writer says, "That is the Cross, more bright than the sun, if the sun is darkened and the Cross appears; for it would not appear if it were not brighter than the sun's rays. And why does this Sign appear? that the shamelessness of the Jews might the more abundantly be stopped. For Christ cometh to that tribunal, having with Him the Cross, His greatest justification, and showing not His wounds only, but His shameful death." Thus Origen, "As at the dispensation of the Cross the sun was eclipsed, and darkness was spread over the earth, so when the Sign of the Son of Man appears in Heaven, the light of the sun, moon, and stars shall fail, as though waning before the power of that Sign: this we understand to be the might of the Cross." And St. Jerome, following out as usual the thoughts of Origen, on the same passage says, "It is not that their light will be diminished (for we read, that the light of the

sun will be sevenfold); but that all things will be darkened to the sight in comparison of the true light. If therefore that sun, which now glows through the whole world, and the moon, which is the second luminary, and the stars, which are lit up for the solace of night, and all the powers of Heaven (by which we understand the angelic multitudes), shall be considered as turned into darkness by the coming of Christ; let their self-confidence be shaken, who esteem themselves Saints, but dread not the presence of the Judge." "That is," says Theophylact, "the Angelic virtues shall be astonished, seeing that such great things are done, and that their fellow-servants are judged:" or, with St. Chrysostom, the "universe standing before the terrible tribunal." "What wonder is it," says Bede, "that men should be troubled at this judgment, the sight of which makes the very Angelic powers to tremble? As Job hath said, 'The pillars of Heaven tremble, and are astonished at His reproof.' What shall the stories of the house do when the pillars tremble? What shall the shrub of the desert undergo when the cedar of Paradise is shaken?"

It seems generally received, that the Sign of the Son of Man is the Cross; and it may be, that our Lord did not express it by that word, as the meaning of it would not have been at that time intelligible to the disciples; for the expression of "bearing the Cross," which He sometimes used, would have a clear meaning, without reference to His own death, which afterwards gave that expression such a fearful emphasis. The Sign appears here mentioned as distinguished from the Son of Man Himself appearing; but they are both connected; for as "they shall look upon Him Whom they pierced," it seems intimated by the expression, that the marks of His

sufferings will be in some manner distinctly visible on His return to judgment.

And then, at the sight of this Sign, shall "all the tribes of the earth mourn." Perhaps it was at the thought of this, that our Lord "sighed deeply in spirit," when the Jews asked Him for a sign; for, as if in answer to their repeated request, this awful Sign is at length given them, the sign sought by "a sinful and adulterous generation;" the sign of the prophet Jonas, who after his restoration to life, preached for forty days to Nineveh, and not in vain. And it is to be observed, that the Evangelist of the Jews alone, St. Matthew⁵, records this Sign, and the mourning that will follow. It seems probable, that to the same circumstance St. John alludes in the Revelation⁶, "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen." Of the same also the prophet Zechariah had said, "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son⁷." The expressions that follow in the prophet, of this mourning being "by every family apart, and their wives apart," seem to indicate that the mourning is to be by each individual for himself alone, his own life, calling, and personal sins, which this Sign is to call to remembrance. We cannot, of course, explain how this mourning is to be, now at the last, or how before the consummation of all things there will be at this sight "the exceeding bitter cry," as of Esau; because, like Esau, they have

⁵ Matt. xxiv. 30. See also xii. 40.

⁶ Rev. i. 7.

⁷ Zech. xii. 10.

"found no place for repentance, though sought carefully with tears;" as the unready Virgins, when the door is closed; of those who "shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able;" or those to whom remaineth "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation;" but it may be that the great aggravation and misery of the lost will arise from the thought of Christ Crucified, Whom they had despised. And this seems to be signified in the words, that they will say, "to the mountains, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and," as it is said expressly and significantly, "from the wrath of the Lamb^s." "The Sign shall appear in Heaven," says Origen, "that men of all tribes, who before had not believed Christianity when preached, then by that Sign acknowledging it as made plain, shall grieve and mourn for their ignorance and sins." But if all these things do also bear some application to the Christian times altogether, besides their last and highest fulfilment, then of course it may serve to express the mourning and contrition with which all the tribes of the earth will embrace Christ Crucified, when the Kingdom of Heaven is established, the Sign of the Cross is seen, as now, in Heaven. And perhaps these words at this place signify that such as are reclaimable, will thus, in these last days, turn, being made penitent by these appeals; and to which the prophet Joel may allude, when, in mentioning these signs, he says, "Turn ye now, saith the Lord, to Me with weeping and with mourning, and rend your heart;" and he adds these Christian terms, that "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

"And (then," Mark, Luke) "*they shall behold the Son of Man coming*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*in a cloud*" (Luke),

^s Rev. vi. 16.

or "*in clouds*" (Mark), or "*on the clouds of Heaven*" (Matt.), "*with power and great glory*" (Matt., Luke), "*with great power and glory*" (Mark). The sensible beholding of the Son of Man is, we know, often spoken of in Scripture: as Job says, "Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold;" and St. John, "We shall see Him as He is;" and Zechariah, "They shall look on Him Whom they have pierced." And He is often recognized in His risen and glorified Body; as by the disciples, by St. Stephen at his death, by St. John in the Apocalypse⁹; and with the very marks of His suffering, as by St. Thomas. We may also observe, that whenever our Lord is described on the day of Judgment, it is as Son of Man He speaks of Himself, and is spoken of¹. And indeed it is with reference to the day of Judgment that the Prophet Daniel uses the expression, "One like the Son of Man came with the clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of days²." On one occasion, indeed, our Lord says, "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God³," but this may be here said in distinction from the other; in that, as Son of God He calls the dead to life, but as the Son of Man He judges mankind; as is stated in this passage in St. John: "And He hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man⁴." St. Augustin says of this expression, that it is, "Because the vision of the Son of Man as Crucified is made even to the bad; but the good alone see Him as God, for the pure in heart shall see God." Indeed, no man can see God and live; it is only as being in Christ, and supported by His Spirit within us, we shall be able to bear the vision of God.

⁹ Rev. i. 13.¹ See Study of Gospels, p. 161.² Dan. vii. 13.³ John v. 25.⁴ John v. 27.

It may also be observed, that our Lord's coming is often said expressly to be with clouds, both by Himself, frequently, and by His Prophets and Apostles. As St. John says, "Behold, He cometh with clouds:" as when He ascended, "a cloud received Him out of their sight:" and the Angel declared He should "so come in like manner as they had seen Him go⁵." St. Paul says, that "the Saints shall be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air⁶." The Prophet Isaiah, "The Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt⁷:" it is said⁸ that "the city where our Lord was crucified is spiritually called Egypt." "We may reasonably believe," says St. Augustin, "that He will come again, not only in the same Body, but also in a cloud." It seems difficult to know what is exactly signified by this term, so emphatically repeated: it may be, that the companies of Angels which attend Him will, at the distance, have the appearance of clouds which attend the sun; or may it be that, in addition to their literal interpretation, they mystically signify His Saints, formed of the waters of Baptism and the breath of the Spirit. But should we not rather suppose that words thus solemnly repeated on this awful occasion have a higher and more dread meaning even than these? The cloud has attended the manifestation of the Son of Man, as in the Transfiguration, which was significative of the Resurrection, and from the bright cloud which overshadowed them came the Voice of God. And in the coming out of Egypt, another type of the Resurrection, the Presence of God was in the cloud; and in like manner in a swift cloud is He to return to Egypt to Judgment. We may therefore suppose that He will

⁵ Acts i. 9. 11.

⁷ Isa. xix. 1.

⁶ 1 Thess. iv. 17

⁸ Rev. xi. 8.

come in a cloud, and borne on and in clouds of ministering Spirits, Prophets, Apostles, and Saints, who make manifest His comings and goings; or we may take it to signify that He will come, borne in and on the power of the Most High and the Holy Spirit, after some inscrutable and most awful manner. It seems best to consider it, that the literal and spiritual significations will both be combined in its fulfilments. He comes now mystically in clouds,—of Prophets, and Ministers, and Saints. He will also come, with them visibly attending Him, on the Last Day; and also literally in the clouds of Heaven, as of old. And thus St. Ambrose explains it even of the coming out of Egypt, not only that the Presence of God was in the material cloud, but also that He was revealed through Moses and Joshua, who led them as clouds that veiled His Presence, Which was with them. However, nature itself affords no emblem more remarkable, if we might without irreverence consider it as such. It will be evident to all, that there is no sight which our eyes witness more beautiful and magnificent than the movement of clouds in the resplendency of the sun, nor more awful than the same when bringing up the storm; and fully charged with lightnings and thunder.

Thus Origen explains it—“As at the transfiguration, a Voice came out of the cloud, so when He shall come again transformed into His glorious appearance, it shall be not on one cloud, but upon many, which shall be His chariot. And if when the Son of God went up to Jerusalem, they who loved Him spread their garments in the way, not willing that even the ass that carried Him should tread upon the earth; what wonder if the Father and God of all should spread the clouds of Heaven under the body of the Son, when He comes to the work of the consumma-

tion?" And again, "It behoves the Father to give all such admirable gifts to the Son, because He humbled Himself, and He has also exalted Him, not only spiritually, but bodily, that He should come upon such clouds, and perhaps upon rational clouds, that even the chariot of the glorified Son of Man should not be irrational⁹." The same writer says, "Or He comes every day '*with great power*' to the mind of the believer in the clouds of prophecy; that is, in the Scriptures of the Prophets and the Apostles, who utter the word of God with a meaning above human nature. Also we say that to those who understand He comes '*with great glory*,' and that this is the more seen in the second coming of the Word, which is to the perfect. And so it may be, that all which the three Evangelists have said concerning Christ's coming, if carefully compared together and thoroughly examined, would be found to apply to His continual daily coming in His body, which is the Church; of which coming, He said in another place, 'Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of Heaven.'" And St. Augustin on the words, "He shall send His Angels," adds, "who from the four quarters of the world shall gather together His elect. All these things He does at 'the last hour', coming in His members as in the clouds, or in the whole Church as in one great cloud, as now He ceases not to come."

"And (then," Mark) "*He shall send forth His angels*" (Matt., Mark), "*with the great voice of a trumpet*" (Matt.), "*and they*" (or *He*, Mark) "*shall gather together His elect from the four winds*" (Matt., Mark), "*from the one end of Heaven to the other*" (Matt.), "*from the uttermost part of*"

⁹ Aur. Cat. in Matt. Ox. Tr. p. 826.

¹ 1 John ii. 18.

earth to the uttermost part of Heaven" (Mark). We may observe that the Day of Judgment is seldom spoken of without the distinct mention of Angels; as, "the Son of Man shall send forth His Angels;" and, "the Son of Man shall come, and all the holy Angels with Him." In one parable the Angels draw the net to shore; in another they are the reapers that gather in the harvest. It may also be observed, that the trumpet is especially introduced on that dreadful day—"The Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God²;" and, "We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound³." We know not what this trumpet on the Last Day may signify, but doubtless something great and awful, worthy of that Day of days, and of the preparations of God; for it seems evidently prefigured strongly in the Law, and carried on in the Revelation, where the Angels sound the seven trumpets with such solemnity and effect⁴. We know that the Law was the shadow of things in Heaven, and of things to come; and in the Law the making of the trumpets was prescribed by God Himself with a minute and mysterious carefulness⁵: they were to be used on "the calling of the assembly and the journeying of camps;" on "the day of gladness;" on the new moons and solemn feast days: and on one occasion it is said, "The Lord God shall blow the trumpet⁶." They were sanctified especially to miraculous use. By the sound of them the walls of Jericho fell down; and with them Gideon overcame the enemy. These, it is evident, have an especial reference to the Great Day: and doubtless, in allusion to this, the Prophet

² 1 Thess. iv. 16.³ 1 Cor. xv. 52.⁴ Rev. viii.⁵ Numb. x. 2.⁶ Zech. ix. 14.

Joel, in speaking of that day repeats the words, "Blow the trumpet—call a solemn assembly⁷." But two especial occasions of their use are to be noticed. One of these was on the Feast of Trumpets; the intention of which was not known; but is supposed to have been in commemoration of the Law issued on Mount Sinai, when God came down "with the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud;" or of the beginning of the year, in memorial of the creation of the world, which is supposed to have taken place at that time of the year. These, again, may both typify the new year, and the new creation of Christ's Advent, and the gathering of His Church. The other occasion of their most solemn use is described in "the journeying of the camps," when they were sounded by "the sons of Aaron, the Priests," in their movements towards Canaan. No one can read at length the detailed and particular account of that solemnity of the moving of the camp⁸, when the camp was arranged, as to the four winds, east and west, and north and south, but he will see that so solemn a movement, marshalled and ordered of God Himself, did typify and set forth this gathering of God's Church "from the four winds," to take possession of the Heavenly Canaan. And if the Jewish Church did typify and represent this movement and gathering of the Christian Church, we may well suppose that the Christian Church visible may be intended to do the same, in setting forth beforehand those invisible things of God. For in this, even now, Christ hath sent forth His ministers, whom He designates His Angels, and also His reapers, —to gather His elect; for this word "elect" is applied to His visible Church on earth, as well as to that in Heaven. And their gathering from the four winds into

⁷ Joel ii. 15.

⁸ Numb. x.

the Christian Church is expressly spoken of: "He hath delivered them from the hand of the enemy, and gathered them from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south⁹." And Isaiah, "I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth¹." And His gathering is by the breath of the Holy Spirit: for Ezekiel says, "Then said He unto me, Prophesy unto the wind: prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live²." His Ministers, though they literally sound not the trumpet, yet they are called His heralds; and they who proclaim His word are in Scripture likened to the trumpet: "Lift up thy voice like a trumpet³;" and, "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle⁴?" The loud voice of the trumpet may signify the clear and distinct call of the Gospel, unlike that of the Law. Thus Origen says of the Angelic trump—"Not giving an uncertain sound, but clear and manifest, that they who have heard and learned may prepare themselves for the way of perfection, which leadeth unto the Son of God⁵." And in another place, "There is, according to the Law, a Festival of Trumpets, the new moon of the seventh moon; perhaps a mystery of some true festival, and of some spiritual trumpet and greatness of speech." St. Jerome also connects this trumpet with those of the Old Testament, and spiritually interprets them. "Of this trumpet," he says, "the Apostle also speaks; and we

⁹ Ps. cvii. 2, 3.¹ Isa. xliii. 5, 6.² Ezek. xxxvii. 9.³ Isa. lviii. 1.⁴ 1 Cor. xiv. 8.⁵ Com. in Matt.

read of it in the Apocalypse of St. John; and in the Old Testament injunction is given for the making of trumpets of gold, and brass, and silver, to sound the sublime sacraments of doctrine⁶." Add to which, we may remember, that St. Paul mentions "the new moons" among the "shadows of things to come⁷." In all these points we can see but very little; but this little is like a glimpse of great things in these types. What if every movement of that camp of Israel did but prefigure what this passage speaks of? What if not the trumpet only, but every other sacred instrument, and the musical voice of man, be but the faint emblem of things Divine?

But what is signified by the expression "from one end of Heaven to the other?" May it not be, from the whole of Christ's Kingdom from the beginning to the end of time? And "from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of Heaven," which St. Mark mentions, may imply the bodies which are laid in earth, and the spirits of the just which God will bring with Him from the furthest Heaven.

SECTION VI

THE WARNINGS

"But when these things begin to happen, look up, and lift up your heads," which have been cast down; *"for your redemption draweth nigh. And He spake a parable unto them, Behold the fig-tree"* (Luke). *"Learn a parable from the fig-tree. When her branch now becometh tender,*

⁶ In Matt. iv. 24.

⁷ Col. ii. 16, 17.

and putteth forth leaves" (Matt., Mark) : "*and all the trees when they now shoot forth, as ye behold of your own selves*" (Luke), "*ye know that summer is (now,*" Luke) "*nigh at hand. So also ye, when ye shall see (all,*" Matt.) "*these things come to pass, know ye that it (the kingdom of God,*" Luke) "*is near*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*even at the doors*" (Matt., Mark).

The gradual approach of that Day is intimated in these words, which may suggest a difficulty, as it is always represented as coming suddenly, "as a thief in the night;" the hour being unknown to all created beings, and its overtaking the world unawares. Which apparent discrepancy, like every other in Scripture, arrests our attention to some great truth; for it is of course entirely consistent throughout. The judgments of God do almost always overtake sinners unawares; and yet it might be shown by a great induction, that they never come without clear and distinct warnings from God. Although the great characteristic of the Day of Judgment is its extreme suddenness, yet our Lord seems to intimate that its approach may be discernible by good men. And St. Paul clearly states both of these points: "Ye yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night:" "but ye are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.¹" And this mode of learning Heavenly truths by observation and induction, precisely as we learn things in nature, is what our Lord spoke of to the Pharisees; He condemned them for not gathering moral truths, as they did physical; for not judging of the times, as they did of the weather. And His words on that occasion seem to refer to both His Comings; as if He had said, "When it is evening ye say, It will be fine weather, for the sky is

¹ 1 Thess. v. 2. 4.

red; and in the morning ye say, It will be a storm, for the sky is red and lowering²;" but ye neither discern now my gentle approach; nor will ye then, when I return amid the convulsions of all nature. And it may be observed, that those judgments of God to which the Day of Judgment is likened, on account of this suddenness, were not without warnings; but were sudden on account of those warnings being unheeded, as in the case of the flood, which Noah both knew and preached beforehand.

The coming on of the Kingdom of God is here, with peculiar force and beauty, likened to the approach of summer; for we know that the spring is the lively emblem of the Resurrection. In winter the trees appear dead, though containing within them vital power, and leaves, and blossom, and fruit: and suddenly, when they feel the summer sun, do they burst forth, as if they had concealed within them a new and beautiful creation, of which no external sign appeared. So is it with all of us now, "the fig-tree and all the trees;" but the Day of Judgment will bring it forth. Thus also the world itself, though containing Christ within it, yet is as dead, and waiting for His manifestation. As Origen says in his beautiful description of this, "The world and all those that are saved, had before Christ's Coming their vital energies dormant within them, as in a season of winter; but Christ's breathing upon them shall make the branches of their hearts soft and tender." And St. Chrysostom, "Wherever He speaks of what must by all means come to pass, Christ ever brings forward parallel physical laws." In these places it seems as if the "fig-tree" were taken for the whole human race; as Augustin also takes it. Origen in the above passage speaks of it expressly, either as he that is saved, or as the world,

² Matt. xvi. 2, 3.

and the tender branch as the Church; and applies it to the expression of the Psalmist, of "the tree planted by the water-side, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season; its leaf also shall not wither:" and also of the Canticles, "Lo, winter is past; the rain is over and gone: the flowers appear on the earth." He further adds to his glowing description these words: "Great hope therefore is there in the fig-tree, which from the words of God first of all hath made its branch tender, and afterwards showeth rising leaves. To such summer is nigh, and nigh in the very threshold is the glorious Coming of Christ in the clouds, the coming of the glory of the Word of God; for nigh unto men of this kind is the kingdom of God³."

The emblem of the fig-tree itself appears to be a doubtful figure, as has been before pointed out⁴; for it is the barren fig-tree, or Jewish nation, which is cursed; yet sometimes it is good, and put together with grapes; as, "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Perhaps it signifies that which is in Covenant with God, and the fruits of which are sometimes good and sometimes evil. Thus was Israel for a time; but at last found barren. In Jeremiah, at the time of God's judgment, which prefigured this His last Coming, there are "figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil⁵." St. Ambrose seems thus to take it as a sign bearing a double interpretation, and yet in covenant. "The fig-tree and all the trees is," he says, "when every tongue confesses to God, and the people of the Jews also: then the fruit of the Resurrection at the time of the summer fruits will be cropped. Or when the man of sin, the branch of the Synagogue, shall clothe himself with leaves, or light and frail boasting, we may conjecture

³ Com. in Matt. 53.

⁴ See pp. 86—88.

⁵ Jer. xxiv. 3.

judgment to be nigh." "The figure of this tree is," he says, "double ; leaves without fruit are suspected ; such are the garments which the exiles of Paradise have ⁶." It is to be observed that here, when he thus likens Antichrist to the fig-tree, it is as "the branch of the Synagogue," one in covenant with God ; and this application to Antichrist will not appear unreasonable, when we remember that the falling of the stars is likened to that of figs from the tree, both in Isaiah ⁷ and in the Revelation ⁸. The fig-tree, although not so choice as the vine, yet are they both planted in the garden of the Lord. That it may bear acceptable fruit is supposed in Origen's interpretation. May it be, that the vine and fig-tree bear the same relation to each other as the sheep and the goats ; both sacred, but the goats set on the left hand, from unprofitableness ; and the fig-tree interceded for, and tended on, but in vain, and found fruitless and withered?

"*Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, until all (these things,*" Matt., Mark) "*be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away*" (Matt., Mark, Luke). It is evident that the word "this generation," signifies that existing race and nation of the Jews in whose time all these things were fulfilled, as the word is most often used ; thus, "He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, that had done evil in the sight of the Lord, was consumed ⁹." As if it were said, "this generation," these forty years, so often set forth as the period of man's probation, shall not have passed, till all I have said is fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the coming in of the new spiritual kingdom of which I speak, and of

⁶ Expos. in Luc.

⁸ Rev. vi. 13.

⁷ Isa. xxxiv. 4.

⁹ Numb. xxxii. 13.

which you ask and expect to know. For then My Coming shall be, and the sending forth of My messengers to gather in My elect from the four quarters of the world, and My kingdom shall be established, the kingdom of Heaven upon earth¹. But the words that follow would (if nothing else) preclude our confining and limiting it to this interpretation alone ; for it is evident that it also signifies this new and last dispensation of God, which has no other dispensation to follow it on earth. For this dispensation shall not have passed away, this generation, "the generation of the righteous," "the generation of them that seek thy face, O Jacob²," till the great and final fulfilment of all shall have taken place, when, in very deed, the heavens and the earth shall have passed, but, "My word," or "My righteousness," "he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." Thus St. Chrysostom and Theophylact seem to take it as "the generation of the faithful," the Church, to endure to the end. But St. Jerome, either as the whole human race, or especially that of the Jews. Origen seems inclined to interpret it as it has been explained above, in the two senses, although he speaks of the simplicity of those who would confine it to the Jewish nation alone. "We suppose," he says, "that there are two generations, one indeed of the Jews, but another of the Gentiles. And since God is not only the God of the Jews, but also of the Gentiles, therefore the generation of the New Testament, which is in the face of the Saviour, shall not depart to those blessed promises of that world, until all things shall take place which Christ hath spoken of."

Often, we may observe, is the passing away of the heavens and the earth spoken of in distinction from the

¹ See p. 273.

² Ps. xxiv. 6.

Word of God. Of the Law, indeed, it is said³ "that till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled;" but of the words of Christ, that when heaven and earth vanish they shall remain. In the Epistle to the Hebrews it is "they shall vanish, but Thou remainest, and Thy years shall not fail." And the variety of phrase by which it is spoken of will best explain its meaning; here it is "My words:" in the prophet Isaiah it is "My righteousness" and "My salvation⁴:" "The heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, but My salvation shall be for ever, and My righteousness shall not be abolished:" and in the Epistle of St. Peter, it is "the Word of the Lord" that is to "endure for ever⁵." It is, therefore, the "righteousness" of Christ which is to continue when the heavens and earth pass away; His Word, and they that are found in Him; and His words which create all things; these are alone to last for ever. Of which Origen says in a most striking manner: "The words which are spoken by the Saviour will not pass away, for they work that which is theirs to perform, and now and ever will work. . . . But in that He hath said, 'My words shall not pass away,' this, I think, is matter of inquiry, whether, perchance, the words of Moses and the Prophets have passed, but the words of Jesus Christ have not passed away, inasmuch as the things which were prophesied by them are fulfilled; but the words of Christ are always full, and always in the act of being fulfilled, and are every day fulfilled, and yet can never be quite fulfilled. For it is these very words which in the Saints have been fulfilled, and are being fulfilled, and are yet to be fulfilled. Or perhaps we ought not to say that the

³ Matt. v. 18.⁴ Isa. li. 6.⁵ 1 Pet. i. 25.

words either of Moses or of the Prophets are altogether fulfilled ; for, properly speaking, they also are the words of the Son of God, and are ever being fulfilled." It may be that the words of created beings are to last as long as creation, and therefore, "till heaven and earth pass away the law shall not fail ;" but the words of Christ shall not pass away with the creatures, but when heaven and earth pass away, His words shall not, but everlastingly endure.

"But of that day, and hour, knoweth no one, no, not the angels" (Matt., Mark) *"of Heaven"* (Matt.) *"which are in Heaven ; neither the Son ; but the Father"* (Mark) ; *"but My Father only"* (Matt.). These words of the Son not knowing what the Father knows cannot, of course, but be deeply mysterious, inasmuch as the connexion between our Lord's Divine and Human nature cannot but be an unfathomable mystery. It is evident that, as "no one knoweth the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal Him⁶," and, as our Lord says, "All that the Father hath are Mine⁷," and, "I and the Father are One⁸," therefore, of course, the Son of God knoweth all things, and "in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge⁹." But the Son of Man "learned obedience by suffering," and, as Origen observes, "grew in wisdom and stature." Moreover, He communicates all things to His Church, as they are able to bear it, and His Spirit searcheth all things, "even the deep things of God ;" but of that day and that hour, as residing in the flesh, or as residing in His Church, which is Christ, nothing whatever doth He reveal. "It is not for you," said our Lord to His disciples when He left them, and when He had now been speaking for forty days of the

⁶ Matt. xi. 27.

⁸ John x. 30.

⁷ John xvi. 15.

⁹ Col. ii. 3.

things pertaining unto His Church, "it is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power." The consummation of all things is that which God reveals not to any created being, reserving to Himself the power to lengthen or to shorten the days, according to the actions of men. And in like manner it has been notified by Origen, that in the judgments and denunciations which God denounces in the Prophets, He often speaks as if He defined nothing beforehand, but punishes if they shall have sinned, and saves if they shall have kept His commandments. The angels, it appears from this, know many things surpassing human knowledge, and communicate many things to man, as in the Old Testament, which is by the disposition of angels; and the Son speaks to us in the New; but neither angels in the Old, nor the Son in the New, communicate to us any thing respecting the day and hour of the second Advent of Christ. This is one of those treasures of knowledge which are *hid* in Christ; and though in other things He discloses the Father unto His creatures, yet in this He reveals Him not. When He says, "It is not for you to know," says St. Jerome, "He shows that He Himself knows, but that it is not expedient for the Apostles to know, that being always uncertain concerning the coming of the Judge, they might so live every day as if they might be to be judged on the next¹."

It is, indeed, quite in harmony with the many other instances in which our Lord speaks of Himself as acting by commission, by command, in obedience to, by authority and power from, the Father; that is, in this dispensation, as revealed to us as the Son of Man. And it seems also a part of the same mysterious economy, whereby

¹ Aur. Cat. in Matt.

He speaks in the Old Testament; as to Abraham, "Now I know that thou fearest God," and of His repenting and the like; expressions which sound as if God came to have knowledge which He had not before, that He should repent or change, should grieve at what He had done, and mourn over the works of His hands. But, of course, this is all with regard to His dispensation towards us as the Son of Man. For as the Son of Man "He learned obedience," as if His suffering manhood could learn what as God He could not know; as the Son of Man He grew as to body in stature, as to soul in wisdom and in favour with God. And some things are spoken, as it were, exclusively of the Father. "It is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to those for whom it is prepared of My Father²." His elect, His children, are "those whom the Father hath given Him:" none can come to Him "except the Father draw him;" but more especially "the times and seasons the Father hath put in His own power."

"Take heed, watch ye, and pray; for ye know not when the time is" (Mark). *"But as the days of Noah, so shall be also the coming"* (or the presence) *"of the Son of Man. For as they were in the days which were before the flood, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away, so shall also the coming"* (or the presence) *"of the Son of Man be"* (Matt.). It would appear from this as if, although the signs of so fearful a nature are to precede the last Judgment, yet that Day itself will come in a time of peace and thoughtless security, which seems to be intimated by the eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. And still more so by the buying and selling, planting and

² Matt. xx. 23.

building, "as in the days of Lot," which our Lord mentioned, when on a previous occasion in St. Luke³ He warned of these days. And indeed the sudden surprise, as of a thief in the night, signifies a state of ease rather than when men's minds are awakened by signs of terror. For in the last days, as St. Peter says, "There shall be scoffers, saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as from the beginning of the creation⁴." And St. Paul also, "When they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them⁵." "Famines and pestilences," says Origen, "will perhaps be some time before the consummation, but at the end itself neither famine nor war. For they are said to be 'eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage.'" And thus St. Jerome, "We must suppose, according to the Apostle, that after those things which will lay waste mankind, for a short time peace will ensue, promising again that all things will be quiet, that the faith of believers might be tried, whether, when these evils are over, they will expect the coming of their Judge." Such was the stillness of our Lord's burial, after the tumultuous noise of the Crucifixion, before His sudden return at the Resurrection; such are cases we often witness when revolution and war terminate in the false peace of reckless dissipation; and in nature, in the stillness which precedes the flash of lightning and the thunder; like the still small voice after the whirlwind and earthquake had passed⁶. But St. Chrysostom seems to think the words do not so much denote a time of peace, as of insensibility to all warnings, such as there was in the days of Noah, when men were given up to carnal delights and

³ Luke xvii. 28.

⁴ 2 Pet. iii. 4.

⁵ 1 Thess. v. 3.

⁶ See *Passion*, pp. 33—38.

a false security ; not when all is peace and safety, but when they shall say "Peace," and all things are safe. We may suppose that these signs, which our Lord has furnished us with, are not given as the only types of it, but rather as a clue to others which abound, and that all sudden judgments of God, either to nations or to individuals, are intended to be warnings and emblems of the great and final Judgment⁷. But although that great and last Day is that to which our Lord rivets and arrests our most earnest attention, throughout the whole of these warnings, yet we can hardly suppose that His words are applicable merely to that generation who will be alive at the Day of Judgment, but that His predictions and warnings must apply in their fulness to all generations of Christians, who are equally addressed by our Lord's words, are equally concerned, and are, in fact, equally overtaken unawares by that great Day, in the usual unexpectedness of their own deaths. For the whole of this discourse does, we may observe, bear this application throughout. And the words, "the presence of the Son of Man," and "the days of the Son of Man," may well signify the whole of the Christian dispensation. At all events, independently of its last and highest fulfilment in the Day of Judgment, there can be no more striking evidence of the truth of Christianity than the fulfilment of these words, which is now taking place before our eyes in the publication of the Gospel, the reception of it, and the rapid and sudden departure of them, to whom such means of grace have been afforded. For there is no more real and substantial account of our present state, than that which is contained in these words, "In the midst of life we are in death." And it may be observed, that when

⁷ See Study of Gospels, pp. 216. 218.

our Lord describes the reception which the Gospel would meet with, in the parable of the Marriage Supper, He mentions the very same things which He here describes, where it is remarkable, that in speaking of the old world and of Sodom, He omits all mention of their great crimes, but chooses out, for their resemblance to the last days, points innocent in themselves, but of an absorbing worldly nature. In the days of Lot, which are likened to the end of the world, "they bought and sold;" and in the parable of the Marriage Supper, the excuse is, "I have bought oxen, and I go to prove them." In the former they "planted and builded," in the latter the plea is, "I have bought a field, and must needs go and see it." Again, in the days of Noah and of Lot, "they married and gave in marriage;" and the Gospel in the parable is rejected because "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." The same things, therefore, are true of the days of the Son of Man, as appears from Scripture, whether we take them to signify the days of Christ's immediate and final coming, or of the Christian dispensation generally. And these are the things, which, although they might have appeared strange in theory, yet we now witness on all sides, the Gospel practically rejected on account of these reasons. Moreover, the one great point to which our Lord is attracting notice throughout the whole of these warnings, is in some sense true of all generations of Christians, as well as it will be of the last; that their final day does overtake them unawares, not from want of warnings, of which they have great abundance, but from want of attention, on account of their minds being occupied by worldly pursuits. Some of the emblems given of that day's approach contain within them abundant prognostications, however sudden the event may appear to be :

as, "Then shall sudden destruction come upon them, as sorrow cometh on a woman travailing with child." Such are likewise the figures of the tender branch, and putting forth leaves, which betoken summer. In like manner, as those judgments to which it is likened in the Old Testament, which were sudden because unexpected, though foretold. And of this fulfilment in ourselves of all generations, which precede that Advent, Origen thus speaks: "But they who more deeply hear the Gospel, and do all things that altogether in no part the Gospel should be veiled from them, are not much solicitous concerning the general consummation of the world, whether it is to take place suddenly in all places, or to be by parts;" as the flood which for forty days was covering hill and valley: "but this alone they consider, that the consummation of each individual is such, that he himself knows not neither the day nor the hour of his departure, and that on every one of us the Day of the Lord will so come as a thief. On which account it is necessary for each to watch, whether it be in the evening, that is, in youth; or at midnight, that is, in the middle of this our dark human life; or at the cock-crowing, when he is now more advanced in years; or in the morning, when he is now in old age. That when God, the Word, shall have come, bringing the consummation of our going forth into that life, he may be found as one who hath not given sleep to his eyes, nor slumber to his eye-lids, and hath kept the commandment of Him who says, 'Watch ye at all times'.⁸" Theophylact also thus interprets it, applying the four watches of the night to the stages of life, but in a different manner. And St. Augustin, "Why does He say to all what belongs only to those who shall then be alive, if it be not

⁸ Com. in Matt. 56.

that it belongs to all? For that Day comes to each man when his day comes for departing from this life; and for this reason every Christian ought to watch, lest the Advent of the Lord find him unprepared. That day shall find him unprepared whom the last day of life finds unprepared⁹."

"Then two shall be in the field; the one is taken, and the other is left. Two women grinding in a mill; the one is taken, the other is left. Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not at what hour your Lord doth come" (Matt.). Beside the two instances here mentioned, St. Luke, in the similar passage, adds a third, that "Two shall be in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other left." And perhaps the three instances are intended to represent, generally, all the different circumstances and occasions of life; that a distinction will be made in cases where the outward circumstances and callings are similar. With men and women alike, a man in the field, a woman at the mill; in tilling the earth, the life more immediately appointed of God; or in grinding at the mill, a mode of life invented by man; in active life, as these two instances; or in ease or sickness, as the two in bed. These things seem to signify that this necessary watchfulness will be found in worldly callings, and in every various shape of life: and in the very same stations will be found the absence of this fidelity. They will be "taken" at the day of Judgment to meet the Lord with His saints; the other will be "left" to abide the doom. But in the passage in St. Luke, it seems more particularly to refer to natural death, which takes one away; and when it is asked, Where? our Lord answers, that "wheresoever the body is, thither the eagles will be gathered together."

⁹ Aur. Cat. in Mar.

Which (if an interpretation be allowed different from that usually received) may signify, that as birds of prey remove that which falls, so the Angels of God take away to their respective destinations the soul of him that falls in death. Thus all the description will apply also to the present state, as no doubt it does.

Ancient writers, as Origen, Ambrose, Augustin, Hilary, Jerome, and others, interpret these expressions of "two men in a field," and "two women at a mill," mystically; but there appears no consent of interpretation. We may, therefore, perhaps rest with the practical and literal exposition that, as St. Chrysostom explains it, the instances may signify all the various conditions of life, from him "that sitteth on his throne, unto the maidservant that is behind the mill¹."

"But take ye heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and the cares of life, and that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come upon all that sit on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray alway, that ye may be thought worthy to escape all these things that are about to come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke). The term "sitting" may here signify either the couching posture of animals, that are covered by a net and surprised; or it may imply a state of ease and indolence in those over whom the net comes, as opposed to the position of those who stand and watch. Here our Lord informs us of the great hindrances to that watchfulness; as the sin of Sodom was from over-much bread², and the great crimes, into which it fell, were but the dreadful development of the habitual state of their hearts, produced by self-indulgence in food, so is this the first hindrance to

¹ Exod. xi. 5.

² Ezek. xvi. 49.

a holy life, viz. "surfeiting." And akin to this is "drunkenness," the mention of which next follows, the intoxication we may suppose of all worldly imaginations and heated fancies, wherewith many spend their lives in delusions, for "a dream cometh by the multitude of business," filling the mind with unreal phantoms. The only remedy against the first of these is in fasting; and the remedy against the second evil, the intoxications of the world, is a heart possessed by the Spirit of God, which is the "new Wine;" as the Apostle says, "Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit." And the remedy for the third evil is prayer, which is the fruit of the two former; for as worldly care binds in union with this life, prayer leads to union with God. Therefore this unceasing watchfulness, for fear of surprise, is requisite not only for those who will be alive at Christ's coming, but for all in all places; for not on them only, who will be at that time alive, will it come as a snare, but on all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. And as the expression was before used of being "accounted worthy to obtain that world³," so here a singular worthiness is spoken of, "that ye may be accounted worthy" to stand before the Son of Man. Of the exceeding excellence of this worthiness, the prophet seems to speak when he says, "Who may abide," or "Who shall stand when He appeareth⁴?" For if any one is able to stand at that hour, it can only be from the power of the Holy Spirit within him: "The Spirit entered into me when He spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard Him that spake unto me⁵."

"But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken

³ Luke xx. 35.

⁴ Mal. iii. 2.

⁵ Ezek. ii. 2.

through. *Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh* " (Matt.). In the passage before it was "the snare;" and it is now "the thief" at night, taking "the master of the house" by surprise; and again soon after in St. Mark it is "the Master" himself returning and coming unawares on his servants. And perhaps this very indefiniteness and variety itself in the figures may have something to do with "the mystery of godliness," which they serve to describe. May it be that Christ is Himself the Householder who is here spoken of in St. Mark; He who is gone away, and returns when we expect not? And yet Christ in one sense is not absent, but is with us still; He is therefore the Householder watching with us and within us; as with the disciples when Judas, the thief, came by night; and He awoke them, saying, "Behold, he that betrayeth Me is at hand." It is He Whose still and small Voice at the dead of night summons the sleeping virgins, saying, "The Bridegroom cometh." But who is this thief against whom the householder is to watch? Origen supposes it to be the devil. If so, may it not signify "the accuser," who will be present when our Lord comes? Or may not the figure be applied in some sense merely to the Coming itself of our Blessed Lord, to express the suddenness of surprise which will attend it? For the comparison of that Day to a thief in the night, we find from St. Paul, had become as it were a proverbial saying: "Ye yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh, as a thief in the night." And it may be that in this, and all other instances of this sort, the single point of resemblance is to be looked to, and not the whole figure: as in the parable of the unjust judge, and that of the dishonest steward: and many persons and incidents in the Old Testament, which are said to represent the dealings of

Almighty God Himself with His people. Or it may be that in all things, however evil in themselves (and nothing is good when compared with God), we are to consider some holy attribute of God through that medium, some dispensation of His towards ourselves. For there are many circumstances and persons in themselves evil, but in which we have to notice and consider Christ's presence and dealings with mankind. In unnatural parents, in unjust judges, in worldly bishops, or ambitious clergymen, whatever they may be in themselves, yet considered with regard to us, they are God's ordinance, and His dealings with us, to try and exercise or to punish us, and in such respects as representing Him, as His dealings, they are good. Thus even the serpent sets forth the wisdom of His elect: the lion and bear His awful retribution: birds of prey the instinctive coming of His saints to Him.

“For the Son of Man is *as a man taking a far journey, who left his household, and gave authority to his servants, and to each his own work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the lord of the house cometh: at evening, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning. Lest, having come suddenly, he find you sleeping*” (Mark). It is remarkable that this mention of the watches of the night occurs in the description in St. Luke, where our Lord speaks of His coming “in the second or third watch,” although the allusion is different; for whereas, in this passage in St. Mark, it is the lord of the house returning at the unexpected watch, it is in St. Luke the thief coming; the expression indeed is followed in St. Luke by two verses, the same as those just given from St. Matthew, viz. of the thief at night, and the command to watch. In comparing, indeed, that discourse in the twelfth chapter in

St. Luke with that which is here given in St. Matthew and St. Mark, there occur some difficulties and some coincidences of a very remarkable nature. The discourses are usually considered as distinct, and delivered at apparently very different times; and yet there are some passages in St. Matthew and St. Mark which seem to require what is said in St. Luke to explain the introduction of them, and to connect together what might otherwise appear like abrupt allusions. For instance, after the passage just referred to, respecting the thief at night, which is found alike both in St. Matthew and St. Luke, we find in the latter Gospel that St. Peter puts the following question: "Lord, speakest Thou this parable unto us, or even unto all?" But there is nothing in what occurs in St. Luke to afford us any clue to the reason of that inquiry, from any thing our Lord had said, as there stated, but this passage in St. Mark, of the lord of the house departing, and "giving authority to his servants, and to each his own work," immediately suggests St. Peter's question, on account of so direct an allusion to the Apostles themselves, left with authority. Nor is this all, for the place in St. Mark is followed by these words, "*And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.*" Now, the allusion contained in this is not at all apparent from any thing here stated in St. Mark; but this inquiry of St. Peter, which appears to intervene in St. Luke's account, at once explains these words, "What I say unto you, I say unto all." But the whole context will be still more clear, by considering our Lord's answer to St. Peter in St. Luke's account; for that answer is no other than the parable of "the faithful and wise steward," which is here given in St. Matthew also, but without any allusion to that occasion of its introduction, which St. Luke supplies us

with. To this parable, therefore, as given in St. Matthew, we should, properly speaking, attach in a harmony these words of St. Mark, "And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch:"—words that very suitably introduce the parables of the Ten Virgins and of the Talents, which ensue; and serve as a comment on the preceding parable and answer to St. Peter's inquiry. And again, in this master of the house who commits his house to "the faithful and wise servant," or "steward," as St. Matthew mentions, we cannot but recognize the "man going into a far country," just spoken of by St. Mark, but not mentioned either in St. Matthew or St. Luke; although the parable of "the faithful and wise servant," in both of them, seems to have a sort of connexion with this passage in St. Mark, which also seems to give rise to the question of St. Peter. That whole discourse in St. Luke is, indeed, very curious, as considered with a view to a harmony and correspondence of the Evangelists: there appears, among other things, a distinct allusion in it to the ensuing parable of the Ten Virgins;—"Let your loins be girded about and your lamps burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He will return from the wedding."—Yet the allusion is no sufficient proof that they were spoken on the same occasion; for in the same discourse we find as palpable an allusion to what takes place long after, at the Last Supper: "He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them."

The giving "authority to His servants," here spoken of, alludes, of course, to His Apostles, to whom, on His departure, He gave authority "to loose and to bind" in His name; and the expression of assigning "to each his own work" or appointed office, to the different orders

and degrees of those His ministers: which is afterwards more fully put forth as the five, and two, and one talent, or what St. Paul speaks of as the "differences of spiritual gifts." And who is the Porter whom He commands to watch? If with reverence we may suggest it, may it be the same as He speaks of as the Porter in the parable of the fold⁶, whom St. Augustin there interprets as the Holy Spirit⁷? Is it the Holy Spirit, Who "neither slumbers nor sleeps," Whom He hath sent from the Father to keep watch in His Church; He who "opens and shuts," and Who "bears the keys" of hell and of death? Is it He in His Church, together with Whom, and in, and by Whom He hath commanded His ministers, and with them all His people, to "watch," during the watches of this mortal life? Full often, in Holy Scripture, is this mortal life likened unto night. It may be observed, how the illustrations run upon night; it is all of watching as at night; it is as a thief at night; they are servants waiting for their master at night; as virgins watching at night with their lamps. Such is this world compared with that which is to be revealed as lightning, more bright than mid-day; lightning, we may suppose, flashing suddenly on the inner soul. Happy he, who at any watch of the night, at any period of this his dark life, shall seize the lamp of Divine knowledge, kindled with the oil of charity, and shall continue watching with that lamp in his hand, letting his light shine forth in good works. "He watcheth," says Gregory, "who keepeth his eyes open to the vision of the true light."

"Who, therefore, is that faithful and wise servant," or "steward," as it is in St. Luke, "whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing? Verily, I say unto

⁶ John x. 3.

⁷ In Joan. Tr. xlv. 4.

you, that He will set him over all His goods" (Matt.). St. Peter had asked whether it was to themselves in particular that our Lord was giving His warning; and our Lord thus speaks of the special application which His words bear to His own appointed Ministers, although the necessity of watchfulness is equally incumbent upon all. And in the character of a good minister, which He here gives, we cannot but recognize St. Peter himself, whom his Lord, for his fidelity and wisdom, hath set over His household in so prominent a manner. But from this "faithful and wise servant" transition is made almost imperceptibly and without notice to the mention of "that evil servant," which must, of course, be a warning respecting evil ministers; and, from the mode of its introduction, we are naturally inclined to go on and apply it still to the same person; but how can this be, excepting as he is found in the successors of St. Peter? They have indeed signally beaten their fellow-servants, other Bishops, even unto death; and the consequence of this has been the "cutting asunder" of the Catholic Body. As the Jews brought about the judgments of God pronounced upon them by their own hands, so have these by their own hands rent in twain, and hold in division, the Church of God, and as by some mysterious spell, which their own hands have wrought. However that may be, yet "to eat and drink with the drunken" does not appear so applicable to the Clergy of that Church, as to the self-indulgent lives of those who have separated from it.

But tongue of man cannot express the exceeding blessedness of that servant whom his Lord shall find doing His will: he is no other than the master of the inn, to whom the good Samaritan committed his wounded neighbour, saying, "When I come again I will repay." But it

is difficult to know in what sense his Lord will at last "set him over all His goods;" but on other occasions the reward of the righteous is spoken of in a similar manner. "What else does it signify," says Origen, "but being made heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, to Whom the Father hath given all things, as He Himself says, 'All power is given Me in Heaven and in earth?'" "Giving them their meat" is, we may well suppose, supplying them with spiritual nourishment, feeding the lambs and the sheep of Christ, as our Lord afterwards in express words gives command to St. Peter. In doing this he is a faithful Pastor; but he is also a wise Pastor: and this is shown by his doing so "in due season," by spiritual wisdom directing his instructions according to the occasion, withholding or supplying, giving milk or strong meat; "rightly dividing the word of truth," according to "the proportion of the faith." As St. Hilary says, "seasonably dispensing the word of life to a household which is to be nourished by the food of eternity⁸." But besides this faithful and wise adaptation of spiritual instruction in the clergy, Origen applies it also to their dispensation of the revenues and the alms of the Church; that they should be faithful and wise in ascertaining all the circumstances and exigencies of the poor, their former circumstances, their families, their habits: in both cases remembering the Apostle's injunction, "as the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God—now it is required of stewards that a man be found faithful."

"But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming; and shall begin to beat his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he

⁸ Com. in Matt. ad loc.

looketh not for Him, and in an hour that he is not aware of; and shall cut him asunder, and give him his portion with the hypocrites,” or with the unbelievers, as it is in St. Luke: “*there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*” (Matt.). The expression of “cut him asunder,” which also occurs in St. Luke, is of doubtful interpretation: whether it be taken literally, as in the words of Daniel, “the angel of God hath received the sentence of God to cut thee in two⁹ ;” or that he shall sever him from the good things He had promised, as St. Hilary takes it; or sever him from spiritual grace, as Origen; or as St. Jerome, from the company of the Saints. Or we may suppose shall cut him off from His service and household, which is the Church of the living God, and shall cast him out, as the guest without the wedding-garment, into “outer darkness,” where there is “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” The expression “hypocrites” seems to describe the faithless Christians who will be rejected at the Last Day; for they are almost always described as self-deceivers. To “give him his portion” seems also a Scriptural expression, as in Job, “This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed him by God¹ :” and in the Psalms, “Snares, fire and brimstone, storm and tempest; this shall be their portion to drink² .”

The time appears long to the slothful servant and to the scoffer of the last times; but to him who ever lives as “looking for, and hastening unto the coming of the Day of God,” it will appear to come speedily. So will it appear to each as he partakes more of the Spirit of God; for to the Spirit of God it ever appears, as it is ever declared to be, as very quick and sudden: for He searcheth and knoweth all things, even the deep things

⁹ Hist. Sus. 55.

¹ Job xx. 29.

² Ps. xi. 7.

of God. And to him, indeed, who feels he has much to do, the time will appear short in which it is to be done. Nor could the Apostles have been deceived in supposing that Day close at hand ; for it was their Lord's command that they should so consider it ; and they who have lived most up to that command will be found to have come most near to the truth, as it will ultimately be found. For by so doing they most overcome the difficulties of time and sense, and approach unto the mind of Christ, Who not only before the destruction of Jerusalem, but much more after that event, still repeats, "Behold, I come quickly." "Surely I come quickly : " "for the time is at hand³." To His beloved Apostle, and in and through him, this does He declare unto the end, as the first and last thing to be remembered. And as in pledge of that its great and future fulfilment is it even now fulfilled in the experience of us all, for to each and to all of us death appears long in coming ; but to each one and to all it comes very speedily and suddenly. The more wise we become in the matters of eternity, the more will it thus ever seem to be.

SECTION VII

PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS

"*Then,*" that is, on the great Day of the Lord, of which He was speaking, as St. Hilary observes, "*shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which, having taken their lamps, went forth to meet the Bridegroom*"

³ Rev. xxii. 7. 10. 20.

(Matt.). The whole of the Christian dispensation is likened to a state of waiting and looking out for the coming of Christ, with loins girded, and lamps burning; and all baptized Christians are likened to virgins, to the higher and better state, more accepted of God, and sanctified to His more peculiar service. But not all who are so outwardly are so within. For "*five of them were wise, and five were foolish.*" "He puts the parable in the persons of virgins," says St. Chrysostom, "to teach us that great as virginity may be, yet if it wants works of mercy, it will be set without with adulterers." And St. Jerome¹ also says, "Some understand it of virgins only, of whom some were virgins in body and mind, and some those who, though found in the virgin state, yet were of a spirit unsuitable to it." But he adds, that he takes it not merely of virgins, but of the whole human race. As it is addressed to Christians, should we not rather consider it to speak more particularly of Christians? and all the parts of the parable bear out this supposition, for they all had lamps, and the lamps had been once lighted, but some were gone out. The number Ten may signify the whole indefinite number of Christians or of mankind, as this number seems to signify a multitude, or aggregate of individuals, for being numbered into itself, it forms Hundreds and Thousands, and Tens of Thousands. Thus, "Thou hast changed my wages Ten times²," and they "have tempted me now these Ten times³." Hence we have Ten commandments (capable of being multiplied into Ten thousand precepts), Ten talents, Ten pounds, Ten cities, Ten pieces of silver. Whereas Five are the hallowed loaves multiplied indefinitely by Christ's blessing (as the

¹ Com. in Matt. ad loc.

² Gen. xxxi. 7. 41.

³ Numb. xiv. 22.

seed in good ground increasing an Hundred fold), Five are the talents well used, accepted, and rewarded ; Ten are the righteous for whom Abraham interceded in Sodom, and which were granted to his prayer, but Five were not found. St. Hilary thinks that this parable, thus represented by the Ten virgins, was prefigured in the Ten commandments, which, embracing all things in the Law, was written on a page which was necessarily divided into two tables, of which one properly belonged to the right hand and the other to the left, indicating a division of those who were under the Covenant of God into good and bad.

“Those who were foolish, having taken their lamps, took not oil with them.” They were outwardly as satisfactory as the others, both virgins, both waiting, both with lamps in their hands ; but five within had not the Spirit of God, the true anointing of the Spirit, and therefore there could be no light of good works to shine before men ; or had not within them charity, that oil that came of old on the head of Aaron. God Himself is Love and Light also ; the oil, therefore, is the Spirit of God, and Divine Love ; and both these give Light ; and that Light also is one with them ; for that Light is Christ. This is the true oil of gladness that rejoices in God, which arises from the love of Him, and the sense of His favours. *“But they that were wise took oil in their vessels, together with their lamps.”* The oil would profit not without lamps, nor the lamps without oil ; but the wisdom which is from above hath both ; with the external means of grace, it hath grace also to give life to them ; hath the faith or external profession, and hath also love, the genuine fruits of that faith. “The oil,” says Origen, “is always put in Scripture for works of mercy ;” and St. Chrysostom, that the oil denotes charity, alms, and aid afforded to the

needy. In like manner, St. Ambrose and Theophylact ; St. Augustin takes it for the gladness of good works ; St. Jerome explains oil to be knowledge, enlightening the heart by good works ; St. Hilary seems to think that there is in the passage an allusion to Baptism, which was usually called the “enlightening,” or “illumination.” It will be both highly interesting and edifying to take them in all these senses combined. That works of mercy are signified, may be supposed from this, that in the passage in St. Luke, where the expression occurs of “having your loins girded and lights burning,” it is attached to the exhortation of “sell what ye have, and give alms ;” and the like injunctions. We may also conclude that it signifies good works in addition to the mere external reception of the faith ; for in the more full account afterwards of the Day of Judgment, distinction is made to turn upon this point, having done or left undone works agreeable to the faith. For as the lamp fails without oil, so faith, unless it “worketh by love,” goes out and is extinguished. We are also commanded that we should let our “works shine before men.” Add to which that obedience is so intimately connected with knowledge, that knowledge is sometimes put to signify obedience ; and, therefore, while we consider it to be obedience, we may readily allow it to be knowledge also, with St. Jerome. And again, the righteousness and sanctification of the elect is so necessarily combined with Baptism, that the illumination of grace and good works is the illumination of Baptism. In all these points the case is analogous and similar to that of the wedding-garment, as it was described in a former parable. For the divers explanations here given of the oil correspond with those of that Baptismal robe, so variously, yet consistently interpreted by the Church.

This would also support the opinion, that they are Christians who are spoken of, which seems the case also in the two subsequent parables. This indeed seems to be signified not only by the state of virgins, but also by the lamps, as those to whom the Word comes; for "Thy word is a lantern unto my feet." And it may be observed, that through the whole of this discourse the exhortation is to watch and pray, both of which signify Christian good works. Add to which, that not here only, but in all the accounts of the Day of Judgment, the condemnation is on a profession of the faith without works. They who are rejected are spoken of as coming with professions, but being "workers of iniquity;" in the accounts of that day they are described as all admitted to the feast, but one without the wedding-garment; as all having had talents, but not all improved; as all having lamps, but some without oil; as having built on the sand, and not on the rock, because they "have heard" the commands of Christ, but "not done them." And here all go forth to meet Christ; but all have not light; the light of a good life, which burneth more and more unto the perfect Day, or to the coming of Christ, the Sun of Righteousness.

"But while the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered, and were sleeping." Every moment expected, and yet delaying; this is the description of Christ's coming throughout; and in this period they all slept; not the foolish only, but all; they not only slumbered, but slept; they forgot themselves, and their Lord; for the watchfulness of the best, is but as slumber and sleep, compared with what it ought in all reason to be. "In the night of this world," says Origen, "they acted but too negligently, and not up to a true vital sense of things; and

yet the wise lost not their lamps, nor despaired of preserving their oil." But some (as St. Augustin, St. Chrysostom, St. Basil, and St. Jerome) would interpret this sleep of the sleep of death; in which all are laid while the Bridegroom tarried. "*And at midnight there was a cry, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.*" Hence, the nocturns or nightly services of the ancient Church, while as yet they watched. And indeed our Lord had spoken of His coming as at the dead of night, and also at some watch of the night which we know not of. But St. Augustin, Hilary, and others, would explain midnight as the time when no one knew or expected, and Origen as the midnight of carelessness and depth of negligence. Perhaps indeed the depth of night may be the times of Antichrist? so it is considered in that passage of St. Luke⁴, where it is said, "In that night there shall be two men in one bed." Nor does there seem to be any reason why all these senses may not be true, that Christ will come at midnight literally; and figuratively in the depth of carnal security and of Antichrist. The "cry" at midnight Origen supposes to be that of good and ministering Angels, who will waken us all, crying within, in the senses of all that sleep, at so terrible a moment⁵. And what if it should be in fact the same as is signified in that "shout of the Archangel," of which St. Paul speaks? St. Chrysostom seems to take it so; the midnight he considers either as a descriptive part of the parable, or that the Resurrection will be at midnight. At midnight there was a great cry in Egypt; at midnight Babylon was taken; at midnight, when Belshazzar was profaning the vessels of the Temple, a Hand was seen writing on the wall, with the awful words,

⁴ Luke xvii. 34.

⁵ In Matt. 64.

"Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." Add to which, at midnight our Lord was born, and Heaven and earth joined in the song, which Angels sang and Shepherds heard. At night our Lord was taken; He Himself described the seizure of Himself to be as of "a thief in the night." And at midnight He was brought before His judges. The Transfiguration, which was in one sense the coming of His Kingdom, some suppose to have taken place at night. At midnight also was the Resurrection of Christ. "Suddenly," says St. Jerome, "as in the dead of night, and when all are regardless, and sleep is deepest, by the cry of Angels and trumpets of Powers that go before, the advent of Christ will resound. We may say something which perchance may be profitable to the reader. There is a tradition of the Jews, that Christ will come at midnight, after the likeness of that time in Egypt, when the Passover is celebrated, and the destroyer comes, and the Lord passes by our habitations, and with the blood of the Lamb the posts, as it were, of our foreheads are hallowed. From whence I suppose the Apostolical tradition obtained, that on the vigil of the Passover it was not allowable to dismiss the people until midnight; from the expectation of Christ's coming. And after that had passed, having recovered from their apprehension, they all keep the Festival day. From whence also the Psalmist says, 'At midnight I will arise to confess unto Thee'."

"Then arose all those virgins, and trimmed their lamps:" i. e. "they prepared their accounts," says St. Austin; or, as St. Hilary interprets, their bodies and souls were reunited, and the light or consciousness of good deeds was kindled. All arose,—both Egyptians and Israelites arose

⁶ Dan. v. 27.

⁷ Ps. cxix. 62. Com. in Matt. ad loc.

at midnight ; when there was heard the great cry. And then it is said, "*And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil ; for our lamps are gone out. And the wise answered, saying, Not so ; lest haply there should not be enough for us and you ; but go ye rather to those that sell, and buy for yourselves.*" "Call now," says Job⁸, "if there be any that will answer thee ; and to which of the Saints wilt thou turn ? For wrath killeth the foolish." But for himself, he adds, as if with the wise virgins, "I would seek unto God ; and unto God would I commit my cause, Which doeth great things and unsearchable." But what can be the meaning of trimming their lamps and asking others for oil ? it must be matter of conjecture, where tradition is silent ; but the inquiry is a very awful one, as we are certain that we shall one day come to know and experience such things in their fulfilment ; either among the wise, who are asked,—or the foolish, who ask in vain. Whatever it may be, it does not appear that they ask for it of God, nor of any whom He has appointed to bestow it ; nor that they have the price to pay ; "which price," says Origen, "is perseverance and urgency, and love of learning, and diligence, and pains." "It is bought and sold," says St. Jerome, "by hard labour, and alms, and all virtues." But St. Hilary says, that this exhortation to go and buy suggests that, even though late, obedience to God might render them then fit to meet Him with lamps burning⁹. It may simply signify our natural and universal feeling, of turning to others in distress. It seems, at all events, that they will look to those that are good, who in that hour will have enough to do to save themselves. "Lest there should not be enough," they say, "for us and you ;" for in that terrible judgment even

⁸ Job v. 1.

⁹ In Matt. xxvii. 5.

the good are afterwards described as almost despairing of having works sufficient to stand the dreadful trial. "If the righteous scarcely be saved," they can do nothing at that time for others. "For every one shall bear his own burden." "It teaches us," says St. Chrysostom, "that no one will there be able to succour us, if our works betray us; not for want of will, but from want of power: which impossibility the blessed Abraham showed, when he said, 'Betwixt us and you is a great gulf fixed, so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot¹.'" "As in the time of the Babylonish invasion," says St. Jerome, "Jeremiah could not assist sinners; and it was said to him, 'Pray not thou for this people²;' thus terrible will be that day, when each one shall be anxious for himself." Both Hilary and Chrysostom explain those that sell as the poor; by means of whom we are able to lay up treasure in Heaven. But then it will be too late. And here it may be observed, that the want is only now found out and recollected. Thus the house on the sand, and that which is founded on the rock, are both alike, till the storms come upon them: and here both have lamps, nor is there any distinction for a while, till in the night the time of need overtakes them. "*And while they were going to buy, the Bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterwards there come also those other,*" or the remaining, "*virgins; saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us. But He answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not.*" They go in with Him to the marriage. Mysterious and blissful words! Here is the union of earth with Heaven; the consummation of all spiritual joys, which eye hath not seen nor ear heard,

¹ Com. in Matt. lxxiii.

² Jer. vii. 16.

neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. Here is the marriage feast, which has been so often spoken of; wherein is the good wine, which the Heavenly Bridegroom hath kept to the last; here is "the marriage supper of the Lamb³;" "and His wife hath made herself ready." Here is that consummation, which hath been prefigured since the formation of mankind; "A man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh: this is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church⁴." "This marriage," says St. Hilary, "is the putting on of immortality, the joining of corruption with incorruption in a new union." And St. Augustin, "It is when the pure soul is united to the pure Word of God."

And now the door is shut! Awful and most terrible thought! The door is closed, never to be again opened; it is on the outside of that marriage feast, where all is light and rejoicing within; the light of God's countenance, and pleasures at His right hand for evermore; but without is that "outer darkness" before spoken of, and no light in their own lamps to cheer it: no ray of light within or without for evermore. This description of the door being closed is likewise found in another place, as well as that of the "lights burning;" "When once the Master of the house hath risen up and shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us; and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are⁵." Whereas in distinction from this, our present day of grace is described more than once, as "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." And more than this, as a state in which Christ Himself is knocking at the door, and seek-

³ Rev. xix. 9.⁴ Eph. v. 32.⁵ Luke xiii. 25.

ing for admission; "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will enter in to him; and will sup with him, and he with Me⁶." Not only is ready access open to us, but God is taking every means to invite us to it; and puts Himself, as it were, in the place of a suppliant to us, seeking for admission into our hearts, as we shall then have to seek for admission from Him: and putting it in the same figure, as if to awaken us by the contrast to the great privilege of this our day of grace, in distinction from that our day of retribution. The whole parable throws great light and a peculiar interest on the words of that solemn charge before alluded to in St. Luke⁷; and itself derives the same from it. But it may be observed, the figure is not identical with this, but only similar to it: for there they are men on watch, and not virgins. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning: and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He shall return from the wedding; that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open unto Him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching."

"Then came the remaining virgins," or those that were left: thus we read in another place, "The one shall be taken, and the other left;" and afterwards in the separation of the sheep from the goats, we have their place first assigned to the good; and in the parable of the talents it is said to the accepted servant, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," before the other is addressed. And the cry or profession of "Lord, Lord," with which the rejected come at last, is more than once mentioned: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall

⁶ Rev. iii. 20.

⁷ Luke xii. 36.

enter into the kingdom," and "Many shall come to Me on that day, saying, Lord, Lord"—when the same dreadful answer is given. We may observe, that the condemnation is, that they are not "known" of Christ. "Verily, I say unto you, I know you not." Nor is it an accidental expression, as if spoken by man, but one with vast and deep significancy, and as such often found in Scripture. Thus our Lord declared in the Sermon on the Mount that His sentence would be, "Then will I confess unto them, I never knew you^s." So that it is not in knowing God only that eternal life consists, but in being "known of God," after some heavenly and Divine manner. And thus St. Paul corrects himself, as it were, in speaking of this knowledge; for saying, "Ye have known God," he adds, "or rather are known of God⁹;" and in another place, "Now I know in part, then shall I know even as I am known¹." And in like manner the highest expression of God's favour is, "I know thee by name²." And of Abraham the testimony of God is, "For I know him." The expression may, indeed, in some sense, be taken from things earthly: it is something to know a king, or a great man, but it is far higher and better to be known of them; when they know us by name, yea, know our concerns, and ways, and thoughts: then we feel that we are not lost or alone. The same thing seems intended in the expression, "Him will I deny before My Father," i. e. will profess that I know him not.

To this parable our Lord again adds His most earnest charge of watchfulness. "*Watch ye, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man cometh.*" And the more strongly to confirm that

^s Matt. vii. 23.

¹ 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

⁹ Gal. iv. 9.

² Exod. xxxiii. 12.

repeated charge, He again adds to it another parable. "The end of all the saying is," says Origen, "that at all times we prepare ourselves for our departure ; that we give not sleep to our eyes nor slumber to our eyelids, because we know not the day nor the hour of our departure."

The same writer interprets the whole parable as applicable to the five senses, of which the Fathers are used to interpret the number five in Scripture. And we certainly may perceive that if wisdom be in the heart, all the bodily senses will be sanctified and enlightened, and minister to the light of the soul. On the contrary, if the heart is corrupt, the senses all serve that depravity ; and as to heavenly truths, "the eyes are blind, the ears dull of hearing:" there is no taste for things Divine ; the Gospel becomes "a savour unto death;" nor can they "feel" the living Word of God. Such an interpretation as this must not, of course, interfere with the more obvious one ; but it is of itself so far in accordance with other truths of Scripture, which thus speaks of all the senses partaking of inward light, or of the darkness of the heart. "If the light within thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" But "if thy whole body be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when a candle by its brightness lightens thee." If there be light within, then shall the eyes from the works of Providence without minister instruction, the ears from discourse with man: the words of God are "sweet as honey to the throat, yea, sweeter than honey to the mouth," and the scent is as that of the eagle from afar. Thus of seeing, and hearing, and touch, it is spiritually said, "What we have seen, What we have heard, What we have looked upon, and our hands have handled." Of

the taste, "Taste and see how gracious the Lord is." Of the smelling, "Because of the savour of Thy good ointments:" and "We are the savour of Christ." It is evident how strongly the parable applies even in this mystical signification, for in the good man all the senses are full of light: in the bad man all minister to evil. And thus the parable, like other parables respecting the kingdom, would be fulfilled wholly in individuals as well as in the Church. Even to the Church at large, according to such an interpretation, it might be applied, when Christ shall come to be united to one Body, which is the Church. But such expositions require great authority.

In whatever way we understand it, the fearful and impressive lesson is one and the same—"Take heed that the light within thee be not darkness;" for if it be, "how great is that darkness!" Lest the Lord God shall Himself "cause darkness," and "your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, He turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness³." And it be as in the days of Lot, "They smote the men that were at the door with blindness, so that they wearied themselves to find the door⁴."

SECTION VIII

PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

AND now our Lord proceeds to set before us the same lesson respecting the Day of Judgment by another parable, equally forcible, engaging, and awful; but with imagery

³ Jer. xiii. 16.

⁴ Gen. xix. 11.

of a perfectly different kind, and arising out of the other, as partly illustrating and partly carrying it out to fuller meanings, whereby the oil seems to be explained as grace or talents given. After using the words "the Son of Man cometh," as if dwelling on the same word, our Lord adds, "*For it,*" or the kingdom of Heaven, "*is like a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his possessions. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to each according to his own peculiar capability*" (Matt.).

The first thing that occurs to one respecting this parable is a similarity, and yet entire difference, between it and one in St. Luke, which our Lord delivered at, or on leaving, the house of Zaccheus: but the two parables, from their very distinction, tend to throw light on each other. In St. Luke there are ten servants and ten pounds, and the same sum is entrusted to each, one pound to each servant; whereas here, there are only three servants, and the talents entrusted to each are different in amount. And the discrepancy at the conclusion is the opposite to this; for there, though the sum entrusted is one, the increase made is different;—one pound gains ten, another five: and the rewards are different,—one is set over ten cities, another over five. But here the sum entrusted is different, the increase is the same—each doubles the talents entrusted; and the reward is expressed in both cases under the same term, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Thus the pound, or humbler and more common gift, afforded equally to all in St. Luke, may signify the privileges common to all Christians alike; one faith, one baptism, one adoption as of sons, having equally one God and Father. All have one and the same Sacraments: all are members of Christ: all have the common gift of reason

and conscience, and the Word, or seed sown, is given in common to all, which brings forth, thirty, or sixty, or an hundred fold, according to the ground it falls upon. But the talents, or costlier gifts, may express differences of natural character, differences of education, differences of ability, moral and intellectual, of temptations, of examples, and means of grace afforded; all the differences which we observe around us in advantages given or withheld; privileges which, whether greater or less, if equally improved, will be equally rewarded. And this was prefigured in the Law: thus, "He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack¹;" and, "As his part that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike²." If we love God with all the heart, it is alike accepted, though the heart of one be more large than another. The occasion also renders the object and drift of both parables quite different; that in St. Luke was to explain the nature of Christ's kingdom, which all were expecting, teaching them that He was to depart and leave them all His gifts to improve against His return—a kingdom quite different from what they were then anticipating. But this is to impress on His disciples their need of constant watchfulness, diligence, prayer, and alms, according to their several ability, in the various stations He was allotting them in His Church. The common gift to all, spoken of in St. Luke, is the same to each, without reference to their different powers of receiving it; but the diversities of gifts are to each severally, "according to his own peculiar capability" of receiving such graces and privileges of God. In both cases it is "a man going into a far country," as our Lord represents Himself in other

¹ Exod. xvi. 18.

² 1 Sam. xxx. 24.

places also³. And this arises from the human character given to the parables by the expression of "a man" travelling; as Origen notices. "For how is He thus absent," he says, "if where two or three are met together in His name, He is in the midst of them;" and if He is with His disciples to the end of the world; and if it is ever true of Him, as John the Baptist said, "There standeth One among you whom ye know not"? Present our Lord of course always is thus with regard to His Divinity, but not as to His corporeal nature. If we are "absent from the Lord while at home in the body," as St. Paul says, and if here "we walk by faith, not by sight," then, in one sense, is He absent from us during this our state of trial. He has given command to His Porter to watch; even He Himself is watching with us by His Spirit. "The Lord Himself is thy keeper; it is even He that shall keep thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in⁴."

"And immediately he took his journey." For as soon as these privileges are bestowed on each, then they are immediately left to their own free will, and the Lord is as it were away, that they might use them or not without constraint. Or the more primary reference may be to the Apostles themselves, that immediately after He had imparted unto them His full commission and authority, He was parted from them; or to the Day of Pentecost, when, for the last time, He "gave gifts to men" by a visible manifestation, and then left His Church unto the end. *"Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made other five talents."* An interpretation of the last parable was mentioned, whereby the five virgins were explained of the five senses; and St.

³ See p. 135.

⁴ Ps. cxxi. 3. See p. 323.

Jerome here follows up the same ; and certainly it is a beautiful acceptance to suppose the senses illuminated and spiritualized by faith, so as from all earthly things to gain heavenly knowledge ; that the eye, and the ear, and the heart should be in Heaven ; from knowledge of the creature passing continually to the Creator, from things temporal to eternal. But it seems better to explain the five more extensively, of all the gifts of God, whether called those of nature, or of grace, of condition, or opportunities, or sacraments. One receives five talents, and another two ; one has a deeper insight into God's word, or has constitutionally a more kind and liberal disposition than another, or is trained up with more abundant means of grace, and with opportunities of turning the same to good account, or with a higher station in God's Church than another. *"And in like manner he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money."* He hid it in the earth, turning the ability and opportunities that God had given him to earthly things, for "they that mind earthly things" shall not be admitted into the kingdom of God. Such seek their own pleasure, their own honour, not the will of God, nor the honour that cometh from God only ; and yet they have had one talent,—the power to choose between good and ill,—and if they had chosen the good, it would have led them on to higher love and knowledge. Or it may be that the Christian gift has been given them, but they have hidden it, from fear of the world, nor ever allowed it to shine before men, to show that they were Christians. Or it may be taken of those who were tenacious of the Law ; but hid it in the earth, so that it brought not forth its fruit, the Gospel ; or of those who take nature for their law, and say no more can be required

of them ; who fear God as slaves, but do not act up even to that fear. It was "his lord's money," not his own, for it was their lord's goods which were distributed among them.

"After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them." It is "after a long time;" for although that Day is to come so speedily that our Lord speaks of it as almost come already, "the hour cometh and now is," yet before it comes, to the thoughts of men in the flesh it is to appear long, so that it is to come not only quickly, but also suddenly. That is sudden which is not expected, and that is not expected which appears to be long delayed. Thus they are represented as saying in the last days, "Where is the promise of His Coming?" And the evil servant, in this our Lord's discourse, says, "My lord delayeth his coming." And in the last-mentioned parable, they are long waiting, and the Bridegroom is "tarrying." Thus to all of us now the Lord appears long in coming, and yet to each individual it is ultimately found that the time is short ; for short is the life of man : and death and judgment, when they come, will always to each appear sudden. It is, therefore, in deference to this human feeling that Christ here speaks in this parable, putting the parable as of a man, and as the thoughts of men are, viz., that He comes after a long time ; but when He speaks as God, then He says, "I come quickly." After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. *"And so he that had received five talents came, and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents : behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant."* "Good," says St. Chrysostom, "on account of his mercy to the poor;" for St. Chrysostom

interprets this parable, as well as the last, especially of acts of mercy: and "faithful," we may suppose, because he had not converted to his own use the goods of his master. Or, good and faithful together, may signify both works and faith. "*Thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*" He is admitted to behold His countenance, "in Whose presence is the fulness of joy;" "Thou shalt make him glad with the joy of Thy countenance." It is the joy of their Lord, for of His fulness shall they receive, and be admitted to see and share His glories. And not only so, but some power and authority is given, "I will make thee ruler over many things." In like manner, in the other parable of the ten pounds, authority is given over cities; and this is in other places alluded to; thus, in a former parable it was, "He will set him over all His goods," and the Apostles are "in the regeneration to sit on twelve thrones;" the Saints are to sit with Christ on His throne; they are to "judge the world:" they are to have riches given them, in some peculiar sense their own; for "if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?" "*He also that had received two talents came, and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things.*" For they are few indeed and small: light trials, and but for a moment, compared with what they work, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. "*I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*" Here, as it has been observed, the rewards are the same, for proportionate increase in talents given; in the other parable

in St. Luke, the rewards are different for different degrees of increase. And there is this variety in other places ; as, in figurative language, the Saints shall shine “as the stars, for ever and ever :” which may indicate distinction, for “one star differeth from another star in glory ;” but more unequivocally expressed by having authority over ten or five cities. But again the Saints “shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father,” which may intimate absence of distinction, being admitted into the joy of their Lord,—to be one with Christ, and lost in Him in ineffable union. So also in doctrine sometimes it is written, that all men shall be rewarded according to their works : in other places, that they are saved by faith in Christ only, “not of works, lest any man should boast.” And thus, when in one Gospel it is said, that the good shall bring forth, “some thirty, some sixty, some an hundred fold,” in another it is merely stated, “an hundred fold ;” as if the expression were varied with Divine purpose. Perhaps it may be explained, by considering the very nature of Christian works,—for they are works of charity or of humility ; and the more any one performs these works, the more charitable and humble does he become. And the more charity or love of God he has, and the more humility or lowly estimation of himself, the more does he hide himself, and lose himself, in the sense of Christ Crucified, and partake of His merits ; and thus doth he “enter into the joy of his Lord,” being filled with righteousness according to his sense of need ; and his sense of need being according to the abundance of his labours ; thirty, or sixty, or an hundred fold, as he has laboured in employing himself, so is he filled with God. There is expressed a vast difference in the rewards : and yet the rewards are all so infinitely great, that they are in some

sense to us as if there was no difference at all; to us the stars appear all much alike, on account of their being so far from us: but in themselves vast is the difference between them,—their comparative distance, their magnitude, their glory.

“Then he which had received the one talent came, and said, Lord, I knew thee, that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed; and being afraid, I went and hid thy talent in the earth. Behold, thou hast thine own.”

Why the servant receiving the one talent is found the unprofitable one, rather than the others, seems difficult to explain: for we usually find the greater privileges most abused; and it is often said, that “the first shall be last.” Still more inexplicable is the meaning of the reply, both here and in St. Luke; for what is intended by the reaping and gathering, here spoken of? It seems indeed a proverbial expression; but why should the indolent servant give this reason for his unprofitableness? Or what spiritually may it be intended to express respecting the evil thoughts of the wicked? It may merely mean to intimate by that description the unworthy thoughts of God, which are in the bad man; who, whatever he has, says he has but few advantages; or, perhaps, by putting himself out of the way of privileges, has but little afforded him. Or it may express the servile fear in the Jew, the want of love and filial confidence in God, without which there is no acceptable service, saying, “There is no hope; no, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go^s.” Or, as taken by his Lord, it may describe the character of God’s dealings, although in a different way to that intended by the wicked servant;

^s Jer. ii. 25.

for alms given to the poor God lays up in His treasure-house, as done to Himself: the good deeds of Gentiles He remembers, as if done to Himself. And our Lord says of His own dispensations, "Herein is that saying true: One man soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that, whereon ye bestowed no labour⁶." But here envy and complaining enter not into the kingdom of God's elect, for in the same place it is said, "Both he that soweth and he that reapeth rejoice together."

It is in this answer of the unprofitable servant that this parable most resembles that in St. Luke; there also is the expression of fear, "I feared thee," and for a similar reason, "because thou art an austere man," and the same very mysterious allegation, that "thou reapest where thou didst not sow." In both, the same excuse, and the talent "hidden," in St. Luke, "in a napkin," here in St. Matthew, "in the earth." Thus Adam had said, "I was afraid, and hid myself;" and thus Adam and Eve, and all who are rejected on the last day, are described as making excuses for themselves. In both cases alike the bad man has hard thoughts of God. "I held my tongue, and thou thoughtest wickedly that I am even such a one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set before thee the things that thou hast done⁷." For every one's thoughts of God are according to his own character: the just man apprehends His justice; the merciful man His mercy; the pure in heart His holiness. But the wicked man judges of God according to his own wickedness, as is represented in his idols and mythologies of cruel, lustful, envious deities. But the wicked are ever condemned out of their own mouth⁸, and according

⁶ John iv. 37.

⁷ Ps. l. 21.

⁸ Job xv. 6. 1 Kings xx. 40. 2 Sam. xii. 7.

to their own imaginations. For if the unbeliever will act and judge in matters of religion as he does in all matters and actions of daily life, be content with the same evidence, and act seriously under the same uncertainty of truth, it is all that is required of him. And if the worldly man will show that wisdom in things eternal which he does in things temporal, he will not be condemned. *"His Lord answered and said unto him, O wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed. Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and at my coming I should have received mine own with usury."* All that is required of him is, that he should have done that with his master's property, which he would have done with his own. It adds a fearful interest to all these accounts of the Day of Judgment, that they are not crimes or great vices for which men are condemned, but for not doing what they ought to have done; for sins of omission, not of commission; and, perhaps, for this reason, that the heart does not break forth into positive sin, but where duty is previously neglected. *"Take, therefore, the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."* "Hold fast that thou hast, that no one take thy crown," it is said in the Revelation; and it has been before noticed, that privileges and gifts of God are not lost, but transferred from him that has abused them to a more worthy; from Esau to Jacob, from Saul to David, from Israel to Gentiles, from Judas Iscariot to St. Matthias. It is impossible to explain what may be the full meaning of it here. But thus much we see, that

as the Israelites "spoiled the Egyptians," so the Christians have spoiled the Israelites. And this one talent may well be supposed to be the Law, which was to have been developed in love and faith, but which the Jew kept hidden in the earth, in low and earthly interpretations, and offered it unto the Lord at His coming, merely in the letter, as he had received it, forgetting mercy, and having hard thoughts of God, Who was reaping His full harvest from among the Gentiles, where He had not sown the Word; and gathering from the dispersed among the nations, where He had scattered not the seed of Abraham. But for this reason, instead of envious and evil thoughts of God, the Jew ought to have been the more earnest to make increase of His Word; receiving grace and truth of His fulness; out of the abundance of which even Gentiles received. For if he knew Him to be so austere as to exact righteousness of the Gentiles, how much more of the Jew? The Law therefore is taken from the Jew, his one talent, and "given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof," to the Christian who hath the ten pounds: for he in Christian grace and love fulfils the Law also. And the ten pounds may signify him that is advanced in all knowledge and wisdom, so as to discern the mysteries contained in the Law; while another, of less spiritual understanding, who has but the two talents, has not this addition made him of the one talent. And, indeed, Origen does thus explain the five and the two talents; the five indicating the more Divine and sublime sense of Scripture. This might be one interpretation; but if so, only a pledge and figure of something higher and deeper. St. Hilary explains it in a sense of this kind; and, indeed, interprets the whole parable in a similar manner: the one who received the five talents as the Jew,

who kept the Law and believed ; the one who had the two as the Gentile who believes, and enters equally with the Jew into the joy of the Lord, is received into the glory of Christ. His interpretation seems admirably suited to the parable ; but it must not, of course, rest in this alone. It may, as others, be fulfilled in the Jewish nation, and also in individuals : but not only this ; for, as it may be observed of many things in Scripture, even with regard to individuals it may have a fulfilment in the present state, as well as more fully hereafter. They who improve their talents given, even here, whether they be five or two, enter alike into the joy of the Lord, or the riches which are hid in Christ. They double their talents by using them ; by teaching others, and gaining others to the truth (as St. Andrew brings St. Peter, and Philip Nathanael), by alms, by prayers, by mortification, grace given is doubled. And grace given even here, if hidden in sloth and buried, becomes extinguished and lost. And yet, “even one talent is no contemptible gift,” says Origen, “from such a Master.”

“*And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*” There is, perhaps, no subject which our Blessed Lord declares with a repetition and an emphasis so fearful as the punishment of the wicked ; four times in this Gospel has He repeated this terrible expression, of the “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” In the same very awful manner does He, on one occasion, thrice repeat the expression, “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched⁹.” And in this Gospel, on two different occasions, does He repeat the dreadful declaration, and at each time twofold ; that it is better to enter into life with one eye,—that it is

⁹ Mark ix. 44. 46. 48.

better to enter into life with one hand or foot,—than having two, to be cast into hell fire¹.

St. Chrysostom says impressively of the whole passage, “Let us, therefore, hear these words, while there is time; let us embrace our salvation, let us take oil in our lamps, let us gain usury on our talent. For if we waste our time here in idleness, no one will hereafter pity us, although we weep a thousand times. He that had on the unclean garment condemned himself, and it availed him not: he that had the one talent, gave up that which was entrusted to him, and was thereby condemned: and the virgins besought, approached, and knocked; but all was fruitless and in vain. Knowing, therefore, these things, let us lay out our money, our zeal, our authority, and all things, to the benefit of our neighbour. For the talents here mentioned are the powers of each, whether in authority or in money, or in teaching, or in any other matter. Let no one, therefore, say, I have but one talent, and am able to do nothing. Thou art able, even with one, to be approved. For thou art not poorer than that widow, thou art not more unlearned than Peter and John².”

SECTION IX

THE SON OF MAN ON THE THRONE OF HIS GLORY

“When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory. And before Him shall be gathered all the nations, and He shall separate one from another, as

¹ Matt. v. 29, 30; xviii. 8, 9.

² In Matt. Hom. lxxviii.

a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats ; and shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left." The day of account is set before us with such a variety of illustrations, as if purposely to prevent the mind from dwelling too much on any one of the sensible images ; the virgins with lamps, the servants with talents, the sheep and the goats,—the wedding-feast and the wedding-garment ; the Day revealed in fire ; the resemblance to lightning ; the harvest gathered in ; the net brought to shore ; the door closed. But now with less of figure, and therefore with more vividness of terror and majesty ; and with less of terrestrial imagery, less of humanity, to veil the Divine glory. "He does not," says St. Chrysostom, "say in this, as in the other cases, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is like,' but shows of Himself, by direct revelation, saying, 'when the Son of Man shall come in His Majesty.'" Whether this is to be literally fulfilled, we know not ; and there may be difficulties in supposing it can be ; for in what place, it may be asked, can all nations be gathered ? But of this we may be certain, that the words convey to us the closest resemblance and most accurate picture of that event, which our thoughts are capable of receiving. And when Christ shall come to be fully manifested in His Divinity, then in the heart and thoughts of each will He, after some ineffable and wonderful manner, be manifested, both to the good and to the evil ; to the former as "their exceeding great reward," to the latter, "as a consuming fire." For He will not be found "here or there" "in the desert," or "in the chambers," as Man, but fully revealed as God, in a moment of time in every place. And of this we may be sure, that in Divine words, the meaning falls not short of, but infinitely exceeds our conceptions, in accuracy, in vastness, in terror, and in mercy.

Yet not only will He appear as God, but also as Son of Man, with a glorified Body, such as the Transfiguration foreshadowed, and so that "every eye shall see Him." And men shall be also there with their bodies, for the Angels shall gather them from the four winds. "The good and the bad shall see Him in human shape," says St. Augustin, "but afterwards it shall be that He shall be seen in the form of God, for which all believers long." Yet our Lord says in St. John, "they that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God." And Origen seems to take it, that our Lord's Divinity shall be then disclosed. Some have supposed "all the nations" to signify the Heathen; but this conjecture has not, that I am aware of, any ancient authority to support it, nor any argument but that of the expression (*τὰ ἔθνη*), "the nations;" but this term ceases now to be the distinctive appellation of the Gentiles alone, as a separate people from the Jews, and seems used to signify, as in the Revelation, "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." If any point is doubtful, it seems rather whether it be confined to Christians alone, or includes all mankind. Gregory¹ confines it to believers only, good and bad; as a king would judge His own subjects alone, and not professed enemies or foreigners, whom he would deal with in a different manner. Some have believed, says Origen, "that it is spoken of the difference between Christians." And indeed, not only would the terms of the Judgment, but even the figure itself by which it is expressed, lead one to suppose so. For we might have expected the separation would have taken place between clean and unclean animals, which distinction of animals through the Old Testament seems to denote the separa-

¹ Mor. xxvi. 27.

tion between good and bad at the last. Thus e. g. dogs are commonly put for unbelievers, and are distinctly and mysteriously said to be without the Heavenly City which is to come²: whereas the clean and unclean on earth are both of them admitted into the ark of Christ's visible Church. But the goats here found on the left hand, where we should have expected an unclean animal, may imply that both are in covenant with God, both clean animals, both used for sacrifice; but the sheep the better and more valuable for that purpose. The goat is the offering for sin, and in their natural character, the goat is the lustful animal; the sheep the emblem of meekness and innocence. This application of the parable to Christians alone, as found faithful or unfaithful, would be more agreeable to the former parables; for the persons described are the household whom the Lord has left; they have lamps, and are virgins; they are servants, and have talents assigned; and here they are represented by sacred animals, both allowed of God in His service. And it is more like the custom of Scripture, not to speak of "the secret things" of God, as for instance what becomes of the Heathen; but to speak to us who hear the words of our own duties, and responsibilities, and destinies.

Of the whole passage Origen says, after observing that it is dangerous to explain matters of this kind: "I think that, at the time of Christ's Coming, there will be so great a manifestation of Christ and of His Divinity, that not only no one among the righteous, but neither shall any sinner be ignorant of Christ according to what He is: sinners in His sight shall know their own sins; and the righteous shall manifestly see to what an end the seeds of

² Rev. xxii. 15.

righteousness shall have brought them. And this is what He hath said, 'Before Me shall be gathered all nations.' For if now, when neither do all know Christ according to what He is, nor they who seem to know, know Him openly, but by faith only men enter into His Presence, as it is written, 'Come before His Presence with thanksgiving'—how much more rightly are all nations said to be gathered together and set before Him, when openly before all, as well good as bad, believers as well as unbelievers, He shall have become manifest, before the eyes of their mind: not discovered by inquiries of faith or diligence, but brought forward by the manifestation of His Divinity Itself. The Son of God, when He shall have come in His glory, shall not appear in one place and not in another; but as He has been pleased to compare His Coming to the lightning; and as the lightning, when it goeth forth from the east, because it filleth all things, appeareth even unto the west; so when Christ shall have come in His glory, because He shall be in every place, He Himself shall be in the presence of all in every place, and all in every place shall be in His Presence; and so shall they be set before the throne of His Glory, that is, before the Kingdom and Power of His Dominion."

"But when," says Origen, in the same description, "on account of the manifestation of the Son of God, all shall have come to the understanding of Him, then the Saviour shall separate the good from the evil. And they who are saved are called sheep, on account of the gentleness which they have learned of Him, Who said, 'Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly,' and have been ready to go even unto death, after the example of Christ, Who was 'led as a sheep to the slaughter,' and 'as the sheep before his shearers is dumb.' But the wicked are called goats,

because they dangerously climb rough and rugged rocks, and go along precipitous places³."

"Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and ye gave Me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me to drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; naked, and ye clothed Me. I was sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee hungry, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? when saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

There is much worthy of deepest attention in the very words of this great and momentous sentence. They are already separated, and set on the right hand; but the final sentence is yet to come. Thus at the state of death there is a separation, and some mysterious placing on the right hand and on the left; a distinction as between the Rich man and Lazarus; a distinction between those who "sleep in Jesus," and those who do not: although the terrors of the Judgment are still to come. But yet, all that is here spoken of is on the Great Day itself; both the separation and sentence are then made. For, of course, in some sense it may be said, even now in this life, that a separation is made by the Grace of God; and some take their station on the right, and others on the left hand. And now, as here in His kingdom below,

³ Com. in Matt. lxx.

our Lord had said "Come unto Me," so doubtless, in some infinitely higher sense, they are invited to "come to Him." And they are not simply "blessed," but "blessed of My Father;" for "the Father loveth you because ye have loved Me." Nor, as St. Chrysostom observes, is it said, "'Receive the kingdom;' but 'inherit,' as their own paternal or family possession, which had been given them long since." For at Baptism it is given us, and we are made heirs; and it is no less than a kingdom, being made kings for ever, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. And this, it may be noticed, is "prepared" *for them*; whereas, in the other case, it is not said of the fire everlasting, "prepared *for you*," but "for the devil and his angels;" in like manner as it is not said, "cursed of My Father," for the curse of the Law they bring upon themselves. As God is not the author of evil, but sinners bring it on themselves. For God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of His own eternity, but "through envy of the devil came death into the world; and they that do hold of his side do find it⁴." And this had been prepared, even from the foundation of the world: for their "names were written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world;" and "the Book of Life" is "the Book of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world⁵;" and they were received in Him from the beginning. Whereas they that perish are said to be "blotted out of the Book," as having been once there. It is also to be observed how, in this description, our Lord dwells expressly and minutely on each particular by itself; He was hungry,—thirsty,—a stranger,—naked,—sick,—and in prison. Perhaps this implies that great particularity of the Judgment, which is often

⁴ Wisd. ii. 23.

⁵ Rev. xvii. 8; xiii. 8.

signified in other places, as that even "a cup of cold water given for His sake will not lose its reward;" and that "God shall bring every work into judgment, whether it be good or whether it be evil;" and "For every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of Judgment." The Judge, from the love of goodness, dwells particularly on all the good deeds of the righteous; but passes over more summarily the omissions of the wicked. It is also to be observed, that the righteous in their answer dwell on each particular, in each one of these finding themselves wanting,—for they also, as even the good in the parable of the Virgins, had been asleep, and had done nothing compared with what they now feel they ought to have done. Whereas the unrighteous, in their reply, pass over all these neglected duties in a more summary way. They count not up the number of their misdeeds in their self-confidence.

But with regard to the general subject, in which the Judgment of the Great Day is here described to consist, there is no mention made of Martyrdom, nor of a right confession of faith, nor of receiving the Sacraments, nor of laborious diligence in studying the truth,—nor of the other virtues, of fortitude, of chastity, of justice; but only works of mercy. It is on the performance or neglect of these, in all their branches, on which the decision of the Great Day depends. And yet these may be practised by heretics, by those who reject both the Sacraments, and by Mahometans as well as Christians. But, perhaps, the reason for the stress laid on these may be partly this, that they are more in the power of all, than such things as martyrdom, teaching the faith, and other high matters. And although a man may give all his goods to feed the poor, and yet not have charity; yet he can scarcely practise

these works consistently, without charity or the love of Christ : they are of themselves the best preparation of the heart to receive that love : and although persons may practise all these, and yet admit false doctrine from unavoidable ignorance, still if they practise them conscientiously, and as Christ has commanded them to be done, in secret and for His sake, they indicate such a love for the truth that they will receive the truth when it is brought before them. "The tree is known by its fruits ;" such fruits indicate a heart of loving-kindness and mercy : and such cannot but love God as manifested in Christ, for to be merciful is to love mercy, and to love mercy is to love God, for "God is love." And if they love God as manifested in Christ, they cannot but receive all that He has revealed, and therefore cannot continue in heresy. These may be the reasons why these works are mentioned and no other.

But besides this, the distinct mention of these works gives them the very highest and first place ; and this is confirmed by many other considerations. These actions in mankind are those which are most responsive to our condition as accepted and pardoned sinners, and most indicate a practical acceptance of the doctrine of the blessed Atonement ; so that as it is said, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ⁶:" so is it also, "Put ye on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness⁷;" as if one of these implied the other also. It is, moreover, in these actions that we approach most nearly to the perfect Pattern set before us, for the life of Christ, as recorded in the Gospels, consisted mostly in these works, moreover the external condition of Christ being one of poverty and suffering endears that station of life most of

⁶ Rom. xiii. 14.

⁷ Col. iii. 12.

all to His followers, as that which they would most wish to cherish. On account, therefore, of the great pre-eminence of these graces, they are often put almost alone. "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction⁸." These works, it may be added, are the first and natural expression of a heart awakened to a sense of God's judgments, whether by affliction or any other means. Moreover, they imply also the possession of other virtues ; they imply justice, for he who is consistently liberal will much more be just also : they imply temperance and continence, for he who has worldly passions to gratify cannot have the means to give : nor can he have the heart to suffer self-denial for the sake of others, while he is bent on following his lusts ; they imply an absence of covetousness, or will be the best remedy for it⁹ ; they imply an absence of ambition, inasmuch as they seek for a reward that is with God, and wean the heart from earthly projects. The love of God cannot exist without these duties, for "He that seeth that his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him¹⁰?" And where the love of God is not yet attained, they dispose the heart to the attainment of that love ; this experience will teach us, for they diffuse serenity over the heart, and dispose it to prayer ; such actions are laying up treasure with God ; and where the treasure is the heart will be also. When the habit is formed, the heart and affections will follow.

It is, perhaps, for these reasons that our Lord has put forth this in the strongest and most emphatic manner, beyond any thing else in Scripture, bringing it forward and placing it alone in this plain and simple description of the

⁸ James i. 27.

⁹ Luke xii. 15. 33.

¹⁰ 1 John iii. 17.

eternal judgment; He sets it before us in the most constraining manner that could possibly be imagined to act upon our nature, and supply us with motives to our fear and love: for in the first place our eternal portion is there made to depend upon it; and secondly, actions of this sort are more especially done unto Christ Himself, in His members. That this our acceptableness with God does depend on some mysterious resemblance to Christ may be seen by the parable of the good Samaritan, for that sets before all men their duty of neighbourly love in the most simple and engaging manner; but yet there is an almost universal consent, from the earliest times, for considering that there is contained in that parable the very history of Christ's dealing with mankind; in that case, therefore, the atonement and example of Christ in redeeming mankind is given as the very rule of our own conduct to our neighbour. It is that one point in which we are told to imitate the Almighty God Himself; and whereas in one Gospel we read, "Be perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect;" in another we read, in a passage parallel to it, "Be merciful, even as your Father in Heaven is merciful." It is that one point in which our Blessed Saviour held out especially His own example, for mercy implies meekness and lowliness: it is that by which He has Himself told us we may become "the children of our Father which is in Heaven."

There may be, indeed, higher and better services than these which some of Christ's servants may be called upon to administer to the members of His body, by spiritual instruction, by the administration of His sacraments, by converting others unto God, by absolving from sin, and by prayer. But the very acceptableness of these is best shown by showing their likeness unto those duties which Christ

here has blessed. For by teaching and bringing the Gospel to the poor, it might be said, that they afford to Christ's members "the Bread of life," and "the living water:" those that were afar off they bring near unto the covenant of promise: those that were naked they clothe with the Baptismal robe of Christ: those that were bound with the chain of their sins they lead forth into "the glorious liberty of the children of God." And by prayer, moreover, they can more effectually do all things for the poor themselves than by any other way. By prayer we receive Christ Himself, Who is still a wanderer, and "despised and rejected" upon earth, into our own hearts. "When we prepare our heart," says Origen, "by different virtues to receive Him, or those that are His, we receive Him wandering abroad, into the home of our breast, making a 'large upper room furnished and prepared' for the reception of Christ, Who is wandering abroad in the world, together with His disciples."

"Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into the fire everlasting, which is prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and ye gave Me not to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me not to drink. I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in; naked, and ye clothed Me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited Me not. Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have not done it unto one of the least of these, ye have not done it unto Me." It is observable, that on this occasion and on others, those who are rejected are spoken of as being full of self-confidence. Thus, in the Sermon on the Mount, they are represented

as saying, "Have we not prophesied in Thy Name? and in Thy Name done many wonderful works?" By the unprofitable servant, in the former parable, there is no fear or distrust expressed. And at the marriage supper, he who had not on the wedding-garment, is sitting among the other guests apparently without concern. On the contrary, in this and other descriptions, they who are accepted of Christ are full of misgiving; and scarce believe their own acceptance, in the greatness of their surprise and sense of unworthiness. And this will be found to mark these two characters, throughout the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, no self-confidence, or sensible assurance is necessary, as many think, for our final salvation; but, on the contrary, all such feelings are to be suspected. Nor is that humility to be attained by disclaiming or declaiming against works of piety, but by the most diligent practice of such works, and by for ever dwelling on their inestimable importance and value, that we may become the more sensible of our own deficiency. For so says our Blessed Lord, "Whosoever shall do and teach the least of these commandments, the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven."

But what an awful thing it is to neglect or ill-use the poor, for in them we neglect and ill-use Christ Himself, Who, after some wonderful and mysterious manner, is present in them. How it is we know not, but we know He is in them. "As the soul itself," says Origen, "while it dwells in the body, though it feels not hunger as to its own spiritual substance, yet, inasmuch as it is coupled to the body, it feels hunger. So also our Saviour Himself, although with regard to His own Divinity He is incapable of suffering, yet He suffers what His own Body the Church suffers. For in His saints, who

need food, He Himself is hungry. In others His members who have need of medicine, He also is sick, and needs the same. So also in others, who need to be taken in, He Himself is a wanderer in them, is seeking where He may lay His Head. So in the naked He is cold; and when they are clothed He is clad. And if from love Paul saith, 'Who is weak, and I am not weak²?' and this is to the praise of the Apostle, who showeth thereby the greatness of His charity to the faithful: how shall He not much rather than Paul and every man adorned with affection, the Son of the Love of God, the Saviour, say suitably of Himself, 'Who is weak, and I am not weak?'—'who is offended, and I burn not?' And therefore He saith, 'I was weak, and in prison, and ye visited Me not.'" And St. Augustin, in like manner of these very constraining words, "It is written," he says to the believers, "'Ye are the body of Christ.' As then the soul dwelling in the body, though it hungers not with respect to its spiritual substance, yet hungers for the food of the body, because it is yoked to the body, so the Saviour suffers whatever His Body the Church suffers, though He Himself is incapable of suffering³."

But it may be observed, that the very words, which our Lord uses on this most awful of all times, are full of consolation to us; for if He has so tender a concern for the sick and the poor as to consider their wants His own, therefore our afflictions are His afflictions, our wants are His; and if He so highly esteems it that others should care for such our wants and afflictions, much more will He Himself care for them. For thus when He says, Forgive seven times a day, if thy brother turn and repent, surely

² 2 Cor. xi. 29.

³ De Civ. Dei, xxi. 10.

seven times a day will He forgive, if we repent, and turn to Him.

“And these shall go into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life everlasting” (Matt.). Even nature itself and philosophy afford indications of eternal evil and eternal good; from the tendencies of vice; the light within becoming darkened; conscience itself corrupted; and the principle of knowing and doing right being lost. And the forebodings of heathen poets respecting a future state, as embodied in their descriptions, indicate the same, and are deeply tinged with a sense of demerit, and consequent punishment; but not without hope of a better place: as in Homer’s description of the shades below, while still he is ever conscious of the existence of a Heaven for the good⁴. And all the descriptions of their poets speak of that punishment as interminable, of walls and gates and streams not to be repassed, and of torments, in a manner unknown to our nature, that never cease, nor can even hope for exchange or respite. But in this, as in all other things, Divine truth when revealed is ever far beyond the thought of man; it manifests God “as a consuming fire,” to the wicked; but yet a fire that, as in the Bush seen of Moses, is not extinguished, and declared to him by the Name of I AM: for to pass through the veil is to see God, and to see God is to see eternity. But still, though in one sense known to philosophy, yet by Christian faith only, and that of the highest kind, is it truly believed. The world cannot receive the doctrine of eternal punishment; the wicked believe it not; yea, though they profess to know it, they believe it not. Nor can we understand it from things sensible. “The soul shall then be united to such a body,” says St. Augustin, “and in such

⁴ See Christ. Schol. pp. 28, 29. 100. 236.

a way, that no pain shall be able to overcome the connexion. Not that there will be no death, but an everlasting death, the soul being unable to live as being without God ; and unable to rid itself of the pains of the body by dying⁶."

This solemn and awful discourse of our Lord was commenced, we must remember, on the Mount of Olives, as He was returning from His last visit to the Temple ; whether the whole of it was delivered at that time and place is not certain, but it appears to have been so ; and it seems to derive much of its force and meaning from the situation, the impressive occasion, and the relation which the whole subject bears to the circumstances, while the last Sun of His teaching was setting, or had already set, over the unhappy Jerusalem. It might possibly have been on the Wednesday evening, but it is usually considered to have been on the Tuesday ; in which case our Lord may have continued throughout the Wednesday at Bethany, in the untold preparations for that awful day that approached. At the end, however, of this discourse, St. Luke observes summarily of these days of His teaching which had now closed, "*And in the day time He was teaching in the temple, and at night He went out, and abode in the Mount that is called the Mount of Olives. And all the people came early in the morning to Him in the temple for to hear Him.*"

And now we have seen our Lord first of all coming to His own Jerusalem as the Messiah and King ; we have beheld Him, then, sitting in the Temple, and therein expounding the laws and privileges of His kingdom ; and then at the close of this we have the Day of Judgment, set forth in all its terrors and majesty, on

⁶ De Civ. Dei, xxi. 3.

the Mount of Olives. Such the order of these eventful circumstances may serve to stand as a representation and type of all His dispensations in this His visible kingdom. And now that all these are over, ensues the Great Supper of the Lamb, which the words of St. Matthew seem to intimate. "And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, He said unto His disciples, Ye know that after two days is the Feast of the Passover."

PART IV

The Last Supper

” And Melchisedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine; and he was the Priest of the most High God.”

SECTION I

THE BETRAYAL

“**N**OW *the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover*” (Luke). For though the Passover was properly speaking only one day, yet the eight days together, including the seven days of unleavened bread, were called the Passover: and what a strange combination of fast and festival does it imply, like all our Christian pilgrimage, speaking of bitter herbs and the bread of affliction, and yet, withal, of the great Feast. “*The Passover and the unleavened bread was after two days*” (Mark). “*And it came to pass when Jesus had finished all these sayings, He said unto His disciples, Ye know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man is delivered up to be crucified*” (Matt.). It was, indeed, the one and great Passover, the only true Passover, for Jesus Christ is “delivered up” for us all;

"delivered up" by the Father (as Origen comments on the word) into the hands of mankind out of tender mercy; "delivered up" by His disciple to the Jews out of avarice; "delivered up" by the Chief Priests to the Gentiles out of envy; and by the devil through fear that mankind would be plucked out of his hand by Christ's teaching. It may be observed, that although our Lord had said so much to His disciples of His approaching sufferings, yet this is the first occasion of His specifying to them the exact time. And the very word in connexion with which He introduces it seems full of mysterious meaning—"after two days is the Passover"—whether we consider it with regard to the most significative of all types so long established, and all the history connected with it, or the mere meaning of the word. As that by which we "pass over" from the regions of the shadow of death into the light of immortality, from a worse than Egyptian bondage into the true liberty of the children of God, going forth—"to hold a feast unto the Lord in the wilderness," whereby we pass over from the types of the Law unto the great Antitype: whereby our sins "pass over" unto Him, the true Sacrifice; whereby Christ "passes over" from this world unto the Father, and we in Him. Or if we consider the term itself in the Greek, where, by a curious, and, as it were, providential contingency and Divine suitableness, it becomes changed into a word which seems derived from "suffering." As our Lord had for many months been again and again preparing His disciples for what was coming on, He now gives them more distinct intimations of its approach; but notwithstanding, as it will be also with regard to His last coming, although His warnings are so strong and many, yet they understand not, and the event overtakes

them unawares. Still, from our Lord's frequent intimation of this event, we learn something of His ways and providences towards ourselves, and we may conclude that as He ever continues warning those whom, like Judas, He perceives to be bent on some great wickedness; so, also, by some means or other, does He prepare His disciples for any great trial they may have to sustain, by presentiment, by the teaching of the Spirit, by His Word, by trials preparatory, and the like. It appears strange to us that, as St. Luke says, "they understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken;" so to those who are released from the body may appear our want of understanding, with regard to those intimations which Christ has given us of His second coming.

It was now that Wednesday which we still observe, and the Church has always kept in remembrance, as the day of our Lord's betrayal. When the more violent disturbances of evil men sink into a calm, we forbode more and deeper mischief: and the Pharisees being now foiled in their open attempts upon our Lord, disturbed Him no more openly, but were secretly the more embittered. Having in their former assembly determined on His death, they have recourse to the more desperate means of secret violence to execute their diabolical purpose. Our Lord, therefore, was now left unmolested; but one of His disciples was absent; his evil presence broke not on the calm of this awful retirement, into which He was now withdrawn, to be alone with disciples, or, perhaps, even apart from them, to be alone with God: for a veil is drawn over all that passes with them on this day. But far different scenes and other characters are laid open to us in the words that follow;

Simeon and Levi are there, of whom the guileless Israel said of old, "O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man."

"Then assembled together the Chief Priests, and the Scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the High Priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted" (Matt.); *"and the Chief Priests and the Scribes were seeking"* (Mark, Luke) *"how they might destroy Him"* (Luke), *"how they might take Jesus (Him,"* Mark) *"by subtlety, and kill Him"* (Matt., Mark). *"For they feared the people"* (Luke). *"But they said, Not in the feast,"* i.e. not during the season of the approaching festival, *"lest there be an uproar among the people"* (Matt., Mark). Often before and since has that been fulfilled which the Psalmist spoke; but all other fulfilments were but shadows going before, or further developments afterwards, of this day, when "the rulers took counsel together against the Lord, and against His Anointed." They had determined that it should be either before or after the Feast day, while in the blind execution of their own projects they were working out the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; for all these things He, Who "hath put the times and seasons in His own power," had determined.

It is usually supposed that this, their design that it should not be at the Feast, was overruled and thwarted by the controlling hand of God: so that our Lord's death should have taken place during the Feast, and in the fullest gathering of all the people. And that this was occasioned either by the circumstance here mentioned respecting Judas, and his offer thus intervening, which changed their previous purpose; or that the machinations

of Judas himself were prematurely brought to a crisis by what occurred at the Last Supper, either from some provocation given, or from finding that his traitorous design was known. Thus it is supposed that our Lord was put to death, contrary to their intention, at the Feast; and, indeed, that it was in consequence of this circumstance that He was put into the hands of the Roman Governor; inasmuch as they could not put Him to death during the Festival. But all this goes on the supposition that our Lord was put to death at the Feast: whereas, it is said that the day of His death was "the day of the preparation." And the introduction of this remark in the Sacred Text is capable of another interpretation,—it might be taken to signify that this, their meeting on the Wednesday, and Judas's act and plan of treachery on the Thursday night, were both in order to anticipate the great day of the Paschal Festival (supposing that the Festival came on the Friday evening), and that this occasioned the hasty condemnation on the very night of our Lord's apprehension, and the hurried attempt at execution so early on the following morning. But, notwithstanding, it was so ordered, that the hesitation and delay of Pilate served to publish and court attention to the matter, far more than an execution of their own would have done. In favour of this interpretation it might be said that the words "not in the Feast" seem introduced in this place rather to explain their motives and conduct, than to suggest that their intentions were Divinely overruled in that point. And as even at a previous Council they had already determined on His death, it seems improbable that when they were now met for the purpose of carrying into more immediate and certain execution their diabolical intent, and find means to do

so, that it would be to leave it to the precarious uncertainty of "after the Feast," i. e. "after the days of unleavened bread." But this question is wrapped up in another much disputed and difficult point, viz. at what time the Festival really commenced.

St. Matthew and St. Mark, in following him, now speaking of the betrayal of Judas, introduce the account of the anointing at the Feast at Bethany, and the complaint it occasioned among "the disciples¹," or "some persons" who were present². But, as it was before noticed, neither of them mention that the complaint was made by Judas, or how that circumstance of the Anointing was connected with the conduct of Judas on this day: the incident is introduced without any mention of the reason why it is introduced: but at first sight it would appear, from their account, as if the supper spoken of had taken place on this day of the betrayal. But St. John clears up the whole circumstance by telling us, that the feast there spoken of had taken place on the preceding Saturday, that it was Judas who made the complaint, and that the disappointment to his covetousness on that occasion had made him resolve to betray our Lord on the first opportunity; which occurred on this Wednesday, at the meeting of the Chief Priests. The order of the narrative in St. Matthew is easily explained, when we observe how much it is his custom thus to narrate things;—as in the driving of the buyers and sellers out of the temple, the observation of the disciples respecting the withering of the fig-tree; and, in the previous history, the feast at his own house in Galilee;—according to a certain latent and unexpressed connexion in his own mind, but not that of time³. St. Luke does not allude at all to the supper at

¹ Matt.

² Mark.

³ See p. 12.

Bethany, but merely states now that "*Satan had entered into Judas, who is surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the Twelve.*" The expression, indeed, of Satan entering into him is attributed to various occasions. It was a year preceding this time that our Lord spoke of him as being "a devil;" and, perhaps, it was then an allusion to this his custom of stealing from that bag which he carried for them; unless it be a prophetic declaration of what he would ultimately prove, and an allusion to his fall,—"*I have chosen you Twelve, and one of you is a devil;*" has fallen from that high condition, like Satan from Heaven. Here, in St. Luke, it seems attributed to the determination to betray his Lord; which he had entertained, it seems, ever since that Supper at Bethany. Afterwards at the Last Supper, it is said by St. John, that Satan then entered into him. It seems, therefore, applied to the periods when the evil one takes more full and entire possession.

"*Then went one of the Twelve (he who is called,*" Matt.), "*Judas Iscariot, to the Chief Priests*" (Matt., Mark), "*and communicated with the Chief Priests and the captains, how he might*" (Luke) "*betray Him unto them*" (Mark, Luke): "*and said, What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?*" (Matt.) "*And when they heard it*" (Mark) "*they were glad*" (Mark, Luke). For Satan, who had instigated them, now brought about the very means which they so eagerly desired. "*And they promised*" (Mark) "*and covenanted*" (Luke) "*to give him money*" (Mark, Luke). But he had to deal with persons who, notwithstanding their revenge, were as covetous as himself, and who would buy his services as low as possible. "*And they settled with him for thirty pieces of silver*" (Matt.); "*and he agreed*" (Luke). "*And from that time*"

(Matt.) "*he sought a favourable opportunity to betray Him*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*unto them*" (Luke); that is, an occasion when he might do so, as St. Luke adds, "*in the absence of the multitude,*" or rather, "*without a tumult.*"

"And I said unto them," says the Prophet⁴, "if ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price, thirty pieces of silver; . . . a goodly price that I was prized at of them." Thus Judah of old was bargaining with the Ishmaelites to sell his brother: and he escaped from their hands into the Egypt of the Gentiles, to be made a Lord over them, till his brethren should come as strangers, bowing down to him, and be accepted of him. Why it should have been for twenty pieces of silver⁵ in Joseph the type, and thirty in our Lord Himself, is not apparent; it may have some reference to the age of each, twenty and thirty years. Origen seems to think that the number thirty had some reference to our Lord's age, i. e. before He began His ministry; and if so, it may have been so in the case of Joseph also, for he appears to have been at that time about ten years younger. However that may be, the thirty pieces of silver was the sum specified by the Law for the price of a slave that was gored by an ox⁶, and said to be in our money about three pounds fifteen shillings. Thus did our Lord take on Him "the form of a servant," and died the death of a slave; being prized at this "goodly price," when the "fat bulls of Basan" closed Him "in on every side⁷." Thus was the Lamb purchased beforehand for the slaughter.

Here does Judas stand forth as the type of those disciples, who sell their Lord for money: and Caiaphas, of

⁴ Zech. xi. 12.

⁵ Gen. xxxvii. 28.

⁶ Exod. xxi. 32.

⁷ Ps. xxii. 12.

those who would sacrifice Christ for fear of the Romans : as Pilate afterward of those who would save Him, but for the voice of the people. But Judas is the worst ; and speaking of this betrayal of the Word of God for money, Origen says, "This do all they who receive any kind of worldly things, to betray their Saviour and cast Him out of their soul, the Word of truth Who was in them. And this example is seasonably applied to all those who, committing any sin from motives of avarice and the sake of gain, despise, and, as it were, betray the Word of God. For men of this kind appear openly to cry out, and say to adverse powers who offer any gain for transgressing the Word of God, 'What will ye give me, and I will betray Him unto you?'" How many, alas ! are there whom we would not mention with Judas : yet having obtained gain and authority, which they coveted, in the Church of God, are not what they were before : they have lost the single eye, the light within, and zeal for God's honour ; and seem in some sense, to use the strong expression of Origen, to have "cast the word of God out of their soul," for the sake of gain. When the heart is bent thus to act, the only restraint that remains is worldly shame : when they can betray Christ, "in the absence of the multitude," they find their opportunity to do so.

SECTION II

PREPARATION FOR THE PASSOVER

*"On the first day of unleavened bread" (Matt., Mark),
"when they killed the Passover," or Paschal Lamb (Mark),*

"the disciples of Jesus came unto Him, saying" (Matt.), "His disciples say unto Him" (Mark), "Where wilt Thou that we (go and," Mark) "prepare for Thee to eat the Passover?" (Matt., Mark.) But St. Luke mentions more in detail that it was in answer to our Lord's words that they asked this question, and affords us the names of the disciples. "Now the day of unleavened bread was come, in which the Passover must be killed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, Go ye and prepare for us the Passover, that we may eat." Here it appears that our Lord Himself uses the words "for us that we may eat:" but they say in St. Matthew and St. Mark, "that Thou mayest eat." "And they," St. Luke proceeds, "said unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we prepare?" (Luke.) For of course the Passover could not be eaten where they were now staying at Bethany, but must be at Jerusalem, as the Law had so strictly enjoined ¹, for there also must Christ our Passover be slain; and perhaps it was with a hidden reference to this, as well as to their killing the prophets, that our Lord said, "For it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem ²."

"And He said unto them" (Mark, Luke), "Go ye into the city" (Matt., Mark) "to such a one" (Matt.). The name of this blessed individual who had the honour to receive Christ into his house, on this the greatest of all occasions, like that other favoured one whose colt the King of Heaven deigned to ride, is not mentioned on earth, but we may well suppose that it is known and honoured in Heaven. For Christ knows those that are His, and where they are to be found and how. The "large upper room, furnished," for so large a company, might appear to indicate wealth; and perhaps, like the other two rich men,

¹ Deut. xii. 13.

² Luke xiii. 33.

he was a "disciple, but secretly, for fear of the Jews;" that he was a disciple seems to be indicated by the manner in which they were to address him, as "the Master saith." And the other words, "My time is at hand," and "I will eat the Passover at thy house with My disciples," seems an act of singular kindness to him: perhaps our Lord knew a secret struggle of faith in the good man's mind, and thus prepared him for the great trial to his faith which was to follow. Possibly the reason why his name is not known is, that he himself was ashamed of the Son of Man. But St. Mark and St. Luke, knowing not how much of deep significancy the least words of their Master might contain, add also the particulars of finding Him. "*Behold, when ye have entered into the city*" (Luke), "*there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water, follow him*" (Mark, Luke). This may have been the water with which our Lord washed His disciples' feet; after the figure of which the washings of the Law were now to be converted to Christian Baptism; like the water at the marriage feast, which was changed into the New Wine of the Gospel. In allusion to this Origen speaks of him as the minister "who bears water from the Law and the Gospel, which may be mixed with the wine of the Evangelical word. And let us, who wish to be of the Church, and to celebrate the Passover with Jesus, follow that man." Origen speaks also of this man, as if he might be put to represent "Moses, the giver of the Law:" there is much and deep meaning in the thought, for this celebration was like a passing over from the Law to the Gospel.

Let us, with humble reverence, take up the holy application, and "follow him into the house into which he entereth," which is the Church of God, for such is the house where Christ eats the Passover with His disciples.

The house into which Christ enters must be "furnished and prepared" to receive the Word. The apostate city, that which is "spiritually called Sodom and Egypt," shall supply a house for Christ, the world itself shall receive His Church, shall receive into her bosom that which testifies against her, where Christ and His disciples shall eat the Passover, in the house which Moses, the giver of the Law, hath "furnished and prepared."

"Follow him" (Mark, Luke) "*into the house whither he goeth*" (Luke). "*And wheresoever he shall enter*" (Mark), "*say ye to him*" (Matt.), "*say ye to the master*" (Mark, Luke) "*of the house*" (Luke), "*The Master saith*" (Matt., Mark, Luke), "*My time is at hand ; at thy house I will keep,*" sacrifice or celebrate, "*the Passover with My disciples*" (Matt.). "*Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with My disciples ? And he will show you a large upper room, furnished (and prepared,*" Mark). "*There make ready*" (Mark, Luke) "*for us. And His disciples*" (Mark) "*went forth (and came into the city,*" Mark), "*and found as He had said unto them*" (Mark, Luke). "*And the disciples did as Jesus had commanded them*" (Matt.). "*And they made ready the Passover*" (Matt., Mark, Luke).

These words, that "they made ready the Passover," might seem to indicate that this was itself the Paschal supper ; but there are many considerations which render it doubtful, and it is a subject on which there are very different opinions. The opinion supported by Maldonatus and some others is, that our Lord on this night kept the true Passover according to the Law ; but that the Jews kept it on the following day, according to their own convenience and some traditionary custom : and that in order to avoid losing two successive days, the Passover and the

Sabbath occurring together, they thus made them one. But there does not appear any thing to support this opinion, either in Scripture or Ecclesiastical tradition. And besides which, it makes our Lord's death itself to coincide, not with the true Passover according to the Law, but to one falsely kept by the Jews. Another opinion, which seems to have been that of the early Greek writers, as Origen, Chrysostom, and Theophylact, is that the Feast was properly on the Friday, but that our Lord ate of the Passover by anticipation. The objection made to this opinion is, that the Law fixed the day very positively ; and that in any case of default, it was to be kept on the same day in the next month³. That it is impossible that our Lord, as He so religiously kept the Law, could have made such an alteration ; or if He had done so, that it should have escaped the notice of His enemies. It is also clear, that the Law does not allow of its being kept on both days indifferently. Another opinion is, that it was nothing more than a valedictory supper of our Lord with His disciples. But the words of "making ready" and "eating the Passover" seem to imply more than this.

Without attempting to decide on a point of such difficulty, some reasons may be given for its being considered not as the Paschal Supper according to the Law, strictly and properly speaking, nor altogether the same by anticipation, but as the New Passover instituted of Christ Himself, and having a reference to the great Paschal feast then about to take place, it being the same day, then commencing, on which the Lamb was "slain," but not when it was eaten, but "the day of preparation," as it is termed by all the Evangelists. Our Lord's death may be considered to have begun from the time of His being seized

³ Numb. ix. 11.

and bound by the Jews as for sacrifice. Or rather from the time of His offering up Himself to God in His Passion, and giving Himself to man in the Eucharist; and from which period on the Thursday evening till He completed that Sacrifice on the cross on the Friday, was all the same day, the day "when they killed the Passover." With regard to the supposition that our Lord did eat the Passover, by a kind of anticipation in some sense, there appears something reasonable and satisfactory in it, and which tends to harmonize and fall in with Scriptural indications, and with the great writers alluded to. For the question of the disciples is, "Where wilt Thou that we eat the Passover?" And the inquiry to be made to the master of the house, "Where is the guest-chamber where I may eat the Passover?" Then we read, "They prepared the Passover, and when the hour was come, He sat down;" and then our Lord's words are, "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you;" and the words that follow seem to imply some kind of anticipation, and the reason to explain it, "Before I suffer," i. e. for it is the only opportunity I shall have of doing so; "For I shall not henceforth drink of this fruit of the vine." Yet we cannot suppose that it was strictly the Passover, for how could that be done before the Lamb was slain, which we know was "in the evening"⁴? not on this evening, but on the following evening, when Christ died. Some, indeed, have thought it to have been in some sense the Passover without the Lamb, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, as it is said the Jews celebrate that feast, when absent from the Holy Land, as a kind of memorial, and not a sacrifice; which indeed would be significative of that Holy Supper; but there seem no grounds for such an explanation, nor

⁴ Exod. xii. 6.

does it account for the wine. It may, moreover, be observed, that the word "Feast" (ἑορτή) does not occur in any account of the Last Supper, as if that day was the Feast. Nor is there any allusion to their eating a lamb on that occasion, not even in figure or mystical reference, of which so many occur during this discourse. But when the word "Feast" (ἑορτή) does occur, it is in clear distinction from that Supper: as St. John begins the account by saying, "Now before the Feast" (πρὸ δὲ τῆς ἑορτῆς), and mentions that the disciples thought that Judas was being instructed to provide for the Feast (εἰς τὴν ἑορτήν); which could not have been if they were themselves then partaking of the Paschal Lamb. Of "eating the Passover," indeed (φαγεῖν τὸ Πάσχα), mention is made by the three earlier Evangelists, with an apparent application to this Supper, but not sufficient to afford any decided conclusion; for even these words are used by St. John in distinction from it, with respect to what was to take place on the following day; for on Friday morning the Jews would not enter the Judgment Hall, "that they might eat the Passover" (ἵνα φάγῃσι τὸ Πάσχα). It is, indeed, expressly said by St. Mark, that it was the day when "they killed the Passover," and by St. Luke still more emphatically, "in which the Passover must be killed;" for indeed that day, from Thursday till Friday evening, was the day of the preparation, and the Passover must, indeed, be killed on that day as Christ was. But the Passover must be eaten, and our Sacrifice must mystically be partaken of, on the festival day, which is the Paschal Festival and the Great Sabbath that ensued, and not on the day in which it was killed. But it may be said that the disciples went by our Lord's command to prepare a room for the Passover, and did prepare. But the previous preparation of

the place was most needful according to the Law itself, and still more according to the rigid custom of the Jews, in cleansing the place of all leaven and the like. And when were these things to be prepared but on the Day of the Preparation, i. e. beforehand? Add to which that Joseph of Arimathea, who was a just man, Nicodemus, and others, would not have assisted in burying the dead on the Day of the Feast, nor the women from Galilee have gone to procure the spices; nor, indeed, would the High Priest and Elders have ventured on a feast-day to try and condemn a prisoner; nor would the Crucifixion of the two thieves have taken place on such a Day, nor the demand for Barabbas. So that we cannot consider the Thursday night or the Friday morning as in any way the Feast. Nor does it seem likely that Judas would have left in the midst of the Paschal Supper, nor would his leaving have been supposed to be for such a purpose, nor would they have reclined at the Paschal Supper, for the Law required them to stand. When that holy company came into a house where they were to keep the Festival, that their coming there should be a memorable evening is natural; and that it should partake of the character of the following Festival; particularly so when it was declared that that Festival would not be kept at all (excepting in the kingdom of God); so that this "preparation" was, as far as the Jewish rite was concerned, the consummation also: above all, when it was a valedictory supper, and, as it were, "in haste," "with loins girded, and staff in their hand," and themselves as ready to depart on the morrow. The very disciples themselves might have doubted whether it were the Passover or no, amidst such mysterious circumstances.

But whatever that Supper may have been according to

the Law, as bearing on that legal Feast, yet that it was the Great and New Passover, the one Christian Festival, we doubt not ; and, therefore, the very ambiguity of the expression may be Divinely full of mystery and high things. For the only doubt is, whether it was connected with the old and shadowy Feast ; but there is no doubt but that it was in itself the real and true Passover. And this solution is the more probable, as the ambiguities arise from the three earlier Gospels (which speak of it as in some sense the Passover) ; and St. John is wont on such occasions to come in, although without direct remark, to solve those difficulties. All things, of course, sufficiently indicate, and the general testimony of ancient writers support the conclusion, that Christ died at the exact time when the Paschal Lamb was slain : that is, between the two evenings on the fourteenth day ; as, indeed, we naturally conclude, from the propriety and adaptation of all other things, that it must have been so. Our Lord's death was the great reality, which all that went before shadowed forth and prefigured ; but His death was not the Passover,—was not the partaking of the Lamb, but the slaying of it. What, therefore, was the great reality, which corresponded with the Passover or the Feast itself ? certainly the partaking of the Lamb that was slain,—and that was the Passover that ensued and the Sabbath day that ensued, for they were on that supposition one and the same, as occurring together ; and, therefore, “that day was an high day,” being both the Paschal Feast and the Sabbath. And what were they in reality to the Christian,—but the whole Christian state, which is the great Passover ; the partaking of the Lamb and the great Sabbath ? These are in effect, in reality and in truth, the feeding on the great Sacrifice. As far as it is

dependent on times and seasons, it is our Easter Day; and as far as it is not dependent on times and years, but partakes of eternity and the days of Heaven, it is the Eucharist, which is the foretaste and earnest of that eternity. The anxiety of some writers to make the Last Supper the great Antitype of the Passover in the exact time of its appointment, is to return to Jewish restrictions, "Ye observe days and months, and times and years: I am afraid of you." Besides which, as the great memorial sacrifice was to be henceforth not in slain beasts, but in bread, it seems Divinely suitable that it should have so fallen as to be on a Supper, which was in itself suitable to an "unbloody sacrifice." Why should the true Priest, after the order of Melchizedek, be tied down to the time and place of the Levitical Priesthood? why should our Lord, in abrogating the Law, have gone out of the usual course to keep it by anticipation? For if our Lord partook not of the Paschal Lamb,—neither, indeed, properly speaking, was there a Paschal Lamb to be partaken of at that Passover, for it was the true Lamb of God Himself,—the substance had come. He, indeed, Who was in Himself "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," did sacramentally, substantially, and really, give Himself to them: and, in so doing, fulfilled all the sacrificial types of the Law on this night; but this does not require of necessary fitness that it should have corresponded in time with the Jewish Feast; for we have a parallel in the case of the Sabbath. Our Lord Himself was the great Victim, and the whole Christian kingdom that ensued was a partaking of that Sacrifice; but the Jewish Feast must have its antitype also in the Christian Eucharist: yet this need not correspond in point of time. For the Christian kingdom is the fulfilment of the Jewish

Sabbath: but it has a Sabbath also of its own; but not in point of time the same, not on the same day: yet in the very change of the day it has, no doubt, an appropriate fitness of its own.

This Supper seems, indeed, to have been in one sense an anticipation of the Jewish Passover; but not necessarily by partaking of the Jewish Lamb, but of the Christian bread and wine; of the true Lamb, for "My Flesh is meat indeed"! It was by anticipation of the Lamb that was to be slain at that Passover. And if this be the case, it must not be supposed that our Lord's thus eating of this Supper out of due time, and by anticipation, implied any unfitness, or any strained accommodation of circumstances to meet events; for of all types which prefigured this Supper, it must be said that they were by Him and for Him. On Him they wait, as shadows on the substance; in Him are they all fulfilled. This very anticipation must have had in it some peculiar propriety. A forced coincidence would be unworthy of things so great, and of Him for Whom they are. For it was not accommodated to figures and symbols, but all figures and symbols were accommodated to and formed for it. And it may be observed that a kind of fulfilment, by a sort of anticipation, and yet such as to contain within it a great reality, may be seen in many of the dispensations of God. Thus, for instance, the children of Israel were led on to the land of promise, and that was Canaan. And yet Canaan was not the true land of promise, but only by a sort of anticipation; for there still remained "a rest for the people of God," the only true rest, and that was the great Sabbath or Christian rest, the kingdom of Heaven upon earth. This was that true rest and land of promise, of which Canaan was but the shadow. And again, the

Christian dispensation itself, although called the kingdom of Heaven, and the Election, and the Heavenly Jerusalem, and the New Birth, yet in one sense they are not so, not really what these words designate, but only so called by anticipation. Something of this kind may be said of many actions of our Lord: He forgave sins, and took upon Him the leprosy of mankind; and He baptized by His disciples; and He told them that their "names" were "written in Heaven;" and He preached the Gospel to the poor; yet all these things we believe to have been only sealed and fully wrought for mankind by the Atonement of His Death, and the Presence of His Spirit. Would it not appear, therefore, as if when our Lord did these things in His life He did them really indeed; but yet, humanly speaking, as would appear to us, by anticipation? I say as would appear to us, for to Him Who dwelleth in eternity, things future may be equally present as things that are. In like manner, this Supper may have been an anticipation of the Jewish Paschal sacrifice, but after some Divine fitness; as it was also of the true Paschal Sacrifice on the Cross; and as the Bread and the Wine were the Body and Blood of Christ really indeed, but still by a kind of anticipation of that great Sacrifice; as the Jewish Sabbath was the day previous, and by a sort of anticipation of a truer Sabbath, our Lord's day.

And the very ambiguity which exists on this subject in the Sacred Scriptures may be ordered by Divine Wisdom, for it arises from this, that three of the Evangelists seem to speak of it as if it was the Passover; but the last as if it was not. So, indeed, it is the Passover; the Christian Passover, the great memorial sacrifice; but again it is not,—it is not the Jewish Passover, nor the one and only sacrifice on the Cross. In the same way

that Baptism is the New Birth, the Regeneration, the Kingdom of Heaven; and the baptized are the "elect," the "called," "the sons of God;" for so are these words applied in Scripture. And yet again they are not so: for these words in their higher sense are only applied to the Kingdom hereafter, and to those who shall be found worthy of that Kingdom.

SECTION III

THE CUP OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

"Now when it was evening" (Matt., Mark); "When the hour was come" (Luke), "He cometh" (Mark) "and reclined at table" (Matt., Luke) "with the twelve" (Matt., Mark), "and the twelve Apostles with Him" (Luke). But full of more than human words can reach was the saying of the beloved disciple, when he comes to this narrative. "Before the feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that the hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (John). So full of Divine love were the transactions and the words of that last Supper, so full of consolation to every Christian soul even "unto the end" of the world.

"And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I say unto you, I shall no more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God" (Luke). Very earnest and vehement desire is on no other occasion attributed to our Lord, either by Himself or others; so great was this

occasion when, before He left His disciples, He had to give to them the New Covenant of His Body and Blood. And the opportunity was worthy of it, His last supper, and that at the solemn Feast of the Passover, of their passing over out of the spiritual Egypt, where they were all to be soon "as dead men," into the New Jerusalem. The same earnest desire for that holy Food of life does He still inspire into His members, when they "hunger and thirst" after that Supper, and, like the hart after the water-brooks, the soul longs for God. This expression of vehement desire Theophylact attributes to the human feeling of taking the last leave of His disciples, and His last eating with them. St. Chrysostom to His hastening to and longing for His Cross and Passion. For "how," said He, "am I straitened till it be accomplished?" Others attribute it to His vehement desire of giving these life-giving Mysteries to the world. The last appears most adapted to the occasion, though the other reasons also may be included in it.

For indeed now our Lord significantly intimates that it was the great Passover, the passing over of Himself from the world unto the Father, the passing over of His disciples from the Old Covenant to the New, from death unto life, now in "the evening" of the world, "when the hour was come," foreordained from the beginning. And this He shows by repeating that He should "no more eat thereof till it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God:" although it is not clear with what corresponding action those words were first accompanied; as it appears on the second occasion, when we read: "*And having taken a Cup, He gave thanks, and said, Take ye this, and divide it to yourselves. For I say unto you, I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God shall*

come" (Luke). By those who have inquired into the Jews' traditions and mode of celebrating this Passover, this Cup is said to have been one which was first drunk mixed with water in a solemn manner, with the words, "Blessed be God for the fruit of the vine, and for His holy Convocation." It may be sufficient to observe, that as the Jews were accustomed to a ritual of external symbols, and carried such expressive forms especially into the celebration of their Feasts, there was probably something in itself deeply impressive in these circumstances, and capable of being understood in some measure by the disciples; at all events sufficient to rivet the earnest thought and reverence of those accustomed to such mysterious language of rites and ceremonies. These previous and preparatory circumstances seem certainly to have reference to the appointment of the Eucharist, which ensued; and to have some correspondence in the form in which they are enunciated, the eating of the Passover and the drinking of the Cup being both formally mentioned, one after the other, in the same manner as the Bread and the Cup afterwards. And each of them is followed by a similar expression, the one, "I shall no more eat thereof till it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God;" the other, "I shall not drink thereof till the Kingdom of God shall come." If it was the case that a lamb was eaten, it is here one would suppose it to have taken place; and that this was the Cup of the Old Testament, in distinction from "the Cup" which our Lord afterwards called "the New Testament." And indeed this may have been the reason why St. Luke, who alone mentions it, combines the mention of the Passover and of this Cup with the mention of the Bread and the Cup of the New Covenant afterwards appointed. We read from Bede, "This Cup appertains

to that old Passover, to which He desired to put an end. On receiving which He gave thanks that old things were about to pass away, and all things were about to become new. As just before He said of the eating of the typical Lamb, so also does He say of the typical drinking of the Cup, that He would taste of it no more till the glory of His Resurrection was manifested, and faith in the Kingdom of God should come to the world. That by the two greatest commands of the Law, the Paschal eating and drinking being changed, you may learn that all Sacraments and commands of the Law, which appear to have a carnal meaning, are now to be transformed to a spiritual observance¹." And St. Jerome says of the passage in St. Matthew, "After the typical passover had been fulfilled, and He had eaten the flesh of the Lamb with the Apostles, He taketh Bread, which strengtheneth the heart of man, and passeth on to the true Sacrament of the Passover, that in like manner as Melchizedek, the Priest of the Most High God, made the oblation of Bread and Wine, He also, in the truth of His Body and Blood, might show forth the same. In Luke we read of two Cups, which He gave His disciples to drink. The one of the first month, and the other of the second, that they who could not in the first month eat of the Lamb among the holy, might in the second month eat of the goat among the penitent." It is remarkable that in this place St. Jerome considers the second Cup as the cup of penitence, and indeed the Eucharistic Cup is to us the cup of penitence, for as penitents alone are we received to drink of it.

It may further be observed, that although our Lord uses a similar expression afterwards in appointing the

¹ Aur. Cat. in Luc.

Eucharist, yet He does not speak here as He then does, of their drinking the New Wine, or of His drinking the New Wine with them. And of this Cup, He says generally, "Divide it among yourselves:" thus to the Jews the privileges of God were given to all collectively, for He was the Lord God of the Hebrews; but in the New Covenant it is to each one that the chalice of God's blessing comes—to one, to each, to all in one. The Cup of the Eucharist was perhaps even in connexion with that Festival of a more formal character than this, for St. Luke speaks here of our Lord taking "a cup" (ποτηριον), but afterwards more emphatically "the cup" (το ποτηριον), when He comes to speak of that Sacramental cup. The cup indeed of the Old Testament, compared with that of the New, was as the baptism of John to that of Christ, as the laver of water only to that which is "with the Holy Ghost and with fire;" as Jewish rites, legal and lifeless, but significative, to sacramental Christian ordinances, administered by Christ Himself in His Church, and "full of grace and truth."

Thus when the Israelites ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan, the manna ceased. But not till then, for while in the land of Canaan, and already circumcised by Joshua, the manna continued with them till the first Passover, when they ate of the fruits; as now, though the Kingdom had come, and they were baptized, Christ and His disciples observed the Law, till the last Passover, and the New Communion of His Body and Blood. It is, therefore, as if He had said, "All these things like shadows are now passed away; the true substance is now come; the New Passover and the Kingdom of Heaven is opening upon you."

SECTION IV

WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET

THE beloved disciple here speaks as one ever wrapt in ineffable contemplation of "God manifest in the flesh," Whom he had "seen and heard," and his "hands had handled," and of His unspeakable condescension to mankind. He makes no mention of the Eucharist, having nothing to add to the full account already given of that appointment, and having, as Augustine observes, given an account of its life-giving import in the sixth chapter of his Gospel; but records one expressive action of our Lord, and His discourses which accompanied that first Eucharistic supper. And in so doing he writes as one absorbed in the thoughts of His inconceivable greatness and majesty, commencing by saying, that His "hour was come that He should go unto the Father," and that "the Father had given all things into His hands," when He thus humbled Himself to the action which he is going to record.

"And when it was now supper," "not when it was ended," says St. Augustine, "but prepared, for we are not to understand that the supper was now eaten and finished, for it was while they were at supper that He arose, for He afterwards reclined at the table and gave the sop to the traitor." *"The devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him."* Having, as it were, shot that thought like an envenomed and deadly shaft into his heart, for he had lost the shield of faith, by which he might have quenched all the fiery darts of the enemy. That is to say, that when the occa-

sion of his death was now prepared, and even out of that little number the instrument of perfidy was found, yet His ineffable love ceased not, but rather seemed to increase, and burst forth so strongly as to embrace the very author of His death in His overflowing compassions; "adding this, also," says St. Augustine, "to crown His humility, that He deigned to wash the feet of one whose hands He foresaw were already in crime." "*Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came forth from God, and goeth to God.*" Although He was so infinitely great in Divine Majesty, and at this very time the Father had so highly exalted Him as Son of Man, as to be setting Him on His right hand, giving Him all power and authority in Heaven and in earth, and putting all things in subjection under His feet, yet "*He ariseth from the supper, and layeth aside His garments, and having taken a towel He girded Himself.*" He girded Himself, not only for the readier execution of His work, but taking on Himself the very dress of a slave. He uses the very term Himself on another occasion, as a designation of the office of a slave, when waiting on his lord, whom He represents as saying, "Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me¹."

The very action is emblematic of all the conduct towards us of the great and glorified Word Who was made Flesh. Thus did He continue to abase Himself more and more, as He had already unclothed Himself of His Divine attributes, and emptied Himself of His glory, and being found in fashion as a man, does He still unclothe Himself anew, and take on Him the form of a servant. Yea, He girded Himself: when thus naked of

¹ Luke xvii. 8.

His Heavenly glories, He took hold of, and wrapped around Him as a girdle, the seed of Abraham, as He had said in His Prophet, "as a girdle cleaveth unto the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto Me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith the Lord, that they might be unto Me for a people²." Thus on the day of Expiation was the High Priest girt with a linen girdle. And thus was Christ seen again by His beloved disciple "girt about with a golden girdle³," our great High Priest, of whom it is said, "Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins⁴," for by this His righteousness are our feet wiped clean. And thus, as St. Augustine says, "did He lay aside His garments in death, and was girded with the linen grave-clothes, and that His Passion was our cleansing." Indeed the whole of the action, and St. John's sublime mode of describing it, seems so contained in St. Paul's words, as if they had throughout a secret reference to each other, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; Who, being in the form of God," and equal with God, not only "made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant," but still proceeded to humble Himself more and more, "and became obedient unto death," and not that only, but "even the death of the cross."

"After that He poureth water into a basin." All parts of that humiliating action does He undergo (as Chrysostom observes); it is not before supper, but He arises from supper, leaving the guests at the table, in order to descend to their feet, adding thereby to His humiliation; and then He strips Himself of His clothes;

² Jer. xiii. 11.

³ Rev. i. 13.

⁴ Isa. xi. 5.

and not this only, but girds Himself as a slave; nor does He order others to bring the water, but He Himself fills the basin, pouring in the water as a servant. "*And He began to wash His disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded.*" "Abraham," says Origen, "when he received the three men as strangers, takes not himself water, but says, 'Let water be fetched, and wash ye your feet⁵.'" Nor did Joseph wash the feet of his brethren, but the steward of his house "brought the men into Joseph's house and gave them water, and they washed their feet⁶." But He that describes Himself as, I have come not as one "that sitteth at meat," but as "he that doth serve," and Who justly says, "learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart," He poureth water into the basin. For He knew that no one was able so to wash them, that they should have "part with Him," but Himself alone. Thus did He arise from the table, and humble Himself, in order that we might be enabled to sit at table with Him; as from Heavenly places where He sat He came down, to fit us to ascend thither and sit with Him.

"*He cometh then unto Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto Him, Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?*" The very earnestness of St. Peter's feelings on all occasions accounts for his spontaneous shrinking from such overwhelming lowliness in his Master. But Origen supposes that the other disciples had already acquiesced and submitted to that act of our Lord. He thinks that Judas was the first unto whom our Lord came, and St. Peter the last. St. Chrysostom, that Judas was the first, and St. Peter the second. St. Austin supposes St. Peter to have been the first. But it seems, perhaps, to be more generally

⁵ Gen. xviii. 4.

⁶ Gen. xliii. 24.

supposed that Judas may have been the first: and reasons are assigned for its being so, as, that our Lord might move him by His kindness to repentance, and might set us an example of doing good to our enemies; or, as St. Chrysostom supposes, from the impudent forwardness of the traitor, as when he dipped in the dish. But Origen, as the one who most needed washing; as the good physician goes to the worse case first; and St. Peter he supposes to have been the last, as the one who least needed washing and the care of the Heavenly Physician. St. Augustine has a similar reason for supposing St. Peter the first,—for who knows not, he says, that the most blessed Peter was the chief of the Apostles? If St. Peter was the first or the second, it affords a sufficient reason why the rest of the Apostles should acquiesce, after St. Peter had done so, as St. Chrysostom observes. But they were, perhaps, lost in awful wonder and consternation at the fathomless depths of Divine love that were opening upon them. Theophylact thinks the words of His “coming to Peter,” an indication that he was not the first; but Augustine explains this expression, by supposing that after the preparations for washing He then “cometh to Peter.”

“*Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.*” “That is to say, that he should know,” says St. Chrysostom, “the great utility of that lesson, in leading them to humility.” And St. Augustine, in like manner, speaks of it as teaching us the duty of practising this ourselves. But Origen says our Lord insinuates that it was a mystery. May we not take the more practical lesson of St. Chrysostom and St. Austin, and the more spiritual interpretation of Origen, and combine them together, as mutually

implying each other? It was a lesson of humility, which was human; and it was a mystery, which was Divine and Heavenly; as our Lord was both Man and God. But as through His Manhood only do we come to the knowledge of His Godhead, so by humility alone do we arrive at the participation of this spiritual and mysterious washing; for lowliest actions most approach to Christ Crucified, and enter most into His kingdom. As it has been before instanced in the parable of the good Samaritan⁷, as mystically containing all the economy of Redemption. But to us it was given as a practical lesson of brotherly love, without which the high mysteries and doctrine contained in it would profit us not. And on another occasion, when our Lord gives the injunction, "When thou makest a feast call the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind," He soon after represents Himself in the great mystery of Redemption, under the parable of the Marriage Supper, as inviting "the poor and the maimed, the halt and the blind⁸." Thus does He set before us the same as a part of humble practice, which becomes in Himself an action full likewise of mysterious doctrine. May we not, therefore, understand it in either of three senses?—"this thou shalt know hereafter, when I explain it to you by and by, to-night; or by the teaching of the Spirit in Christ's Kingdom; or the fulness of the wisdom contained in this lesson thou canst only know hereafter in Heaven." And St. Chrysostom, indeed, proceeds to imply that such mysterious doctrine is contained in the practical lesson, "When thou shalt cast out evil spirits in My name, and shalt see Me carried up into Heaven, and shalt be taught by the Spirit that I sit at the right Hand, then shalt thou understand what now

⁷ See pp. 361, 362.

⁸ Luke xiv. 13. 21.

hath been done⁹." From which it seems that Chrysostom supposed the action to have something in it peculiar to the Apostles, as preparatory to their apostolical or sacerdotal office, independently of the general instruction.

"Peter saith unto Him, Thou shalt never wash my feet;" recoiling again in reverential awe, and overcome with consternation, as his Master was stooping down before him in that action of unspeakable lowliness. *"Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me. Simon Peter saith unto Him, Lord, not my feet only, but my hands and my head."* And now, perhaps, when he perceived that there was in that action some mystical import, and that in this consisted his having part with his Lord, from the same earnestness of feeling that had before occasioned his reluctance,—*"disturbed,"* says St. Augustin, *"by both fear and love,"*—he now exclaims, that if he could by so doing partake the more of His love, which he earnestly desired, then would he more than acquiesce: *"not my feet only, but my hands and my head."* If Christ's unspeakable humiliations be the bond of our being more closely knit unto Him, then not only do we suffer them, but rejoice in them, and dread beyond all things, lest we partake not in them. Origen very beautifully ascribes to this natural earnestness in St. Peter, when corrected by the trials it underwent, not only the firmness, but also the gentleness of his subsequent character. Of the whole circumstance he says, *"Oftentimes the Scripture hath indicated of Peter, that he was rather zealous in declaring the things that appeared to him to be better."* As in that uninquiring expression whereby he deprecated that prophecy of Jesus, when He said, *"Ye shall all be offended because of*

⁹ Com. in Joan. ad loc.

Me this night ; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." For without inquiry, and rejecting the declaration of Jesus, he said, " Although all shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended." And this hastiness, which was even then in his soul, was the cause of his being offended beyond the measure of the rest, when he denied Jesus three times before the crowing of the cock. On which account, when he had checked such his former hastiness, he derived the very greatest benefit, so as to have become both most firm and most long-suffering ; which is shown when Paul rebuked him in presence of all, for he with firmness held his peace ; as one may see in the Epistle to the Galatians. And in the Acts of the Apostles his calmness, when he was now transformed into the same image, will appear to those who dwell on and attend to each particular¹. St. Chrysostom, also, speaks of him afterwards as one who being " much forgiven loved much."

" *Jesus saith unto him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean altogether ; and ye are clean, but not all.*" It is difficult to understand these words. Does it mean that this typical action of washing their feet was equivalent to entire washing ? And does our Lord mercifully intend it for those of His Church hereafter who should not be able to obtain entire washing in Baptism, that the spiritual washing was sufficiently obtained ? But St. Austin says, " This expression proves that they were already baptized in Christ's Passion." Bede also, expressing, not his own sentiments, but those of St. Austin : " This washing of the feet signifies not that of Baptism, but that daily washing which we all require for our daily offences after Baptism ; for the dust of this

¹ In Joan. tom. xxxii. 5. See Study of Gospels, pp. 388, 389.

world ever cleaves to our feet, as we proceed along our path through it ; and this washing of our feet is by the Lord's prayer, in which we pray for the forgiveness of our trespasses. And he that is thus washed needeth not save to wash his feet, for he has been washed once for all in Baptism, for the remission of sins. But he needeth not, nay, he cannot have the same repeated. But for his daily failings he needeth still daily forgiveness of his Lord, the washing of his feet from the dust. Such is the case with Apostles, and such as they. But for those who, forgetful of fear, proceed on the left-hand road, much more than this daily washing is needed. Greater pollution needeth greater cleansing, of prayers, and fastings, and tears, and alms."

"For He knew him that betrayed Him, therefore said He, Ye are not all clean." Our Lord had said, "Give alms of such things as ye have, and behold all things are clean unto you ;" but how could he be clean, who, so far from giving alms, stole the alms of others? And He had said, that evil thoughts are from the heart, from whence proceed murders, covetousness, and the like, and that these are the things that defile a man : how, therefore, could he be clean, who had already the determined intention of being the death of his Master? What washing could cleanse his feet, which were even now "swift to shed blood"?

"When, therefore, He had washed their feet, and had taken His garments, He sat down again." Thus for our sakes was He unclothed in death, that He might wash us ; and for our sakes did He clothe Himself again : after His humiliation and sufferings, He took again His human Body, and did eat and drink with His disciples ; and still sits with us, and we with Him, eating and drinking in His spiritual kingdom. *"He sat down again, and said unto them, Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call*

Me Master and Lord : and ye say well ; for so I am." Gracious indeed were these words, for there have been some to whom, to call Christ, Master, was as honey to their throat, and sweeter than honey to their mouth². And for Him to allow the call, is to be accepted as His servants : for some say to Him, "Lord, Lord," whom He accepts not. "*If, therefore, I have washed your feet, your Lord and Master ; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*" "This it was, blessed Peter," says St. Augustin, on this passage, "which thou knewest not, when thou wouldest not permit it to be done. This He promised to thee, that thou shouldest know hereafter." "*For I have given you an example, that ye may do as I have done to you.*" We do not consider this precept to be taken as if the action was a Sacramental rite to be necessarily observed by every Church, because all Churches have not so received it from the beginning. Nor indeed is the literal performance of the action to be considered requisite as a religious duty, although the principle is binding to the very fullest extent, which St. Chrysostom eloquently dwells upon. And Origen, though he thinks it would be ridiculous to stand on the mere literal fulfilment only, yet he alludes to it as to the requisite which St. Paul mentions, as one of the things that characterize the widow who is fit to be received into the Church society, that she should have "washed the saints' feet." But many old writers do greatly commend the literal performance of it, as St. Augustin does. "Wherever," says he, "this practice exists not among the saints, they do in heart what they do not by the hand, if they are of the number of those spoken of in the Hymn as 'O ye humble and holy men of heart.' But it is much better, and without controversy the more true fulfil-

² See Herbert's Poems, "The Odour."

ment, that it should be done by the hands also ; nor let a Christian disdain to do what Christ hath done." He proceeds to say that the very action itself, and inclination of the body to the feet of our brethren, tends to produce or confirm humility in the heart itself. There is a remarkable expression of St. Louis, King of France, to one of his courtiers, the Lord de Joinville, recommending the action—"You should never hold in disdain," said the good king, "what God did for our instruction. I therefore beg of you, out of love to Him first, and then from your regard to me, that you would accustom yourself to do so." The very nature, indeed, of such actions is now changed, for such a practice is not usual among us as a servile office at all, as it then was, and therefore this, if literally performed, would not be the same in spirit and character. But, doubtless, other such bodily expressions of humility, which are of this character, are very profitable. There is also, as St. Augustin says, a spiritual fulfilment of it, without such actions ; such as, forgiving each other's sins, as Christ forgives us ; and by praying for each other, as Christ intercedes for us. So may we be said in some sense to wash each other's feet.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord ; nor an apostle greater than He that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." We cannot but recognize in these words the same appeal which is expressed in some words which St. Luke records, as taking place at this supper, and apparently in allusion to this circumstance, "Who is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth ? but I am among you as he that serveth." And as we find our Lord so often taught by significant action, it may have been that the immediate cause of this action, of washing the disciples' feet

was in consequence of that desire of precedency, which He still observed in the hearts of the disciples, which we soon afterwards find them expressing at this very supper. Another immediate cause of the action may possibly have been some custom of the feast, for washing of hands is spoken of as one of the ceremonial observances. The first and great lesson, then, to us all, contained in this action, we may suppose to be humility ; and next, that the great mystery was contained in it, of our all being washed in the blood of Christ, which the disciples then knew not, but were soon to know, which rendered this humility so essential on our part. St. Ambrose seems to think that it was a kind of sacramental symbol of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, whereby not actual sins only, from which we are delivered at Baptism, but also original and hereditary sin is washed out. But St. Augustin, "that as we are washed all over in Baptism, yet from human affections, and from walking on earth, we have need that our feet be continually cleansed from the pollutions we contract in our daily walk through life. And from these does Christ, by interceding for us, daily wash our feet, and teaches us our daily need of it by the Lord's Prayer, in which we pray for forgiveness." St. Cyprian considers it the need of washing, not for venial sins only, but for the thorough cleansing of all our works, thoughts, and affections by daily repentance, and sighs, and tears, as Baptism itself can never be repeated ; and the washing of the feet of each other by daily forgiveness. And Origen speaks much like to these ; but adds, that "though he appear clean among men, yet with all his care no man can be clean in God's sight unless he is washed by Jesus. But to those who are clean in the sight of men, have been washed in the Baptism of Jesus, and have their feet washed by Him, the

Holy Spirit shall come to dwell with them, and the power from on high shall be their clothing." Others suppose it to intimate that repentance and absolution which is necessary before partaking of the Holy Eucharist; and the occasion seems strongly to support this inference. There appears no reason why these should not all alike be true, and intended by this remarkable action. It has been suggested by an Anglican writer³, that this action of our Lord's corresponded to the lustrations in the Law, which took place before the consecration of Priests, that it was peculiar in its application to the Apostles before they were consecrated by Christ, in order that they might "take part with" Him in His everlasting Priesthood; and limited therefore to them and their successors in the ministry in its significancy. Origen, too, applies it more particularly to the Apostles. He adds, in a vein of expressive poetry, "When Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, then, I suppose, was fulfilled that which had been prophetically spoken concerning His Apostles: 'How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things! But if by washing the feet of disciples He maketh them beautiful, what shall we say of that true beauty which is in them, who are all over baptized by Jesus with the Holy Ghost and with fire? Beautiful were the feet of those that preach the Gospel of good things, when, washed and purified, and wiped clean by the hands of Christ, they were able to enter upon the holy way, and proceed along that way, which is He that hath said, 'I am the Way.' For no one, but he alone, who hath his feet washed by Jesus, goeth along this way, the living way, which leadeth unto the Father. For this way receiveth not feet that are defiled, and which are not yet cleansed. Moses, indeed, had

³ Hardy on the Eucharist.

need to loose the sandal from his feet, since the spot where he had come, and on which he stood, was holy ground. And so likewise, Joshua, the son of Nun. But the disciples of Jesus, that they may proceed along this living and spiritual way, not only require to have no shoes for the way (which Jesus commanded His Apostles), but, in order that they may proceed along this road, require also that Jesus should wash their feet."

Perhaps, indeed, the whole of this Last Supper may be considered, without irreverence, as a mystical emblem of our Lord's sojourn with His Church unto the end, where He sits with His disciples, and feeds them with His Body and Blood, and teaches them, and is pleased with their love. "I have washed my feet," says the Church, in the Canticles, "how shall I defile them⁴?" And that which is true of the Church universal is often true also of any individual Christian; and to each our Lord has said, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me⁵." May we not, therefore, say that this blessed supper may be in our own hearts, where Christ may wash our feet, which have been soiled by the road which we have travelled; may wash our worldly thoughts by His grace; may warn us, and admonish us, and caution us, by His Spirit within us, and by His Providence without, as He did Judas, and St. Peter, and St. Philip at that last table; may give us His Flesh and Blood to eat, which are Spirit and Life; may fill us with those Divine thoughts which He spake in this His last discourse? for He standeth at the door seeking for entrance, and knocketh, and if we will open to Him, He will come in and sup with us. "Even so come,

⁴ Cant. v. 3.

⁵ Rev. iii. 20.

Lord Jesus," sigheth the Holy Spirit in the contrite heart, even so come in Thy mercy, before Thou comest in Thy judgment. "Wash me throughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sins." "Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Wash Thou, not my feet only, but my hands and my head. "I will wash mine hands in innocency, and so will I go to Thine altar."

"Most merciful Master," exclaims the author of that Tract in St. Cyprian⁶, "how often have I transgressed Thy laws, how often have I despised, Lord, Thy declarations! and when Thou saidst unto me, Return, I returned not; when Thou didst threaten, I feared not; when Thou wert good and gentle, I was unrelenting; more than seventy times seven have I sinned against Heaven and before Thee. Who can wash away such pollutions?" "But since with Thee is the fountain of life, and an immeasurable profundity of mercies, those whom Thou hast washed by Baptism, whom Thou hast bathed in Thy blood, whom Thou art always washing by forgiving daily sins, translate Thou from the pools and mud of this world into the most purified Kingdom of Thy glory; where no unclean thing can enter; where there is no more need of washing; where our body shall be fashioned like unto the brightness of Thine own. According to Thy promises Thou must needs fulfil this in us, and Thou Who hast begun a good work in us, perfect and establish the same."

⁶ De Ablutione Pedum.

SECTION V

ORDER OF CIRCUMSTANCES

PERHAPS there is no passage in the Gospel narrative where it is so difficult to come to any satisfactory conclusion as to the order in which the events occurred, by a comparison of the four Gospels, as on this occasion. It would be generally agreed that the washing of the disciples' feet occupied the place which is here assigned to it, for we naturally would suppose it to have occurred on the preceding part of the Feast, and before the appointment of the Eucharist, and it is evidently before the departure of Judas. The next question will be at what time we can best place the disclosure of Judas, and his going out: some think that he had received both the Bread and the Wine; some say, the Bread only; and some, neither. The Gospel of St. John affords us no indication; from St. Matthew and St. Mark, taken in the strict letter, we should suppose that he went out before; from St. Luke, that his leaving the table took place after the Eucharist. Archbishop Newcome, in his *Harmony of the Gospels*, considers that Judas went out before either the Bread or the Wine; and though he separates the distribution of the two from each other, yet he so connects the appointment of the Christian Sacrifice with those last discourses in St. John, as to arrange them to serve as a kind of Eucharistic Sermon or Hymn. One would have been inclined to adopt this plan from the manner in which it seems to harmonize; and his mode of arrangement appears in general judicious, as far as any thing can be so,

that is founded merely on rationalistic arguments without regard to authority. The objection to this arrangement is, that the more prevailing sense of the Church seems to have been, that Judas was present at the distribution of both the Elements: the Fathers allude to his having partaken of them as enhancing his guilt. This St. Chrysostom often does; he says, in speaking of the traitor Judas, that our Lord "gave him his portion of salt, and made him partaker of the Mysteries¹." And Origen: "The food of that supper and the wine that was therein, could find no place in a heart thus wounded by the devil²." And the author of the *De Cœnâ Domini* in St. Cyprian's works: "When his perfidious soul touched the sacred food, and the hallowed Bread entered his wicked mouth, his parricidal soul, sustaining not the power of so great a Sacrament, was like the chaff blown from the threshing-floor, and hurried headlong." St. Augustin very clearly speaks of the same in his *Commentary on St. John*; and in his *Sermons*³; and so arranges it in his *Harmony of the Gospels*. St. Jerome likewise, and the author of the *Commentary on St. Mark*. The words found in Bede are to the same effect: "He sins like Judas, who presumes to violate the inestimable and inviolable Body of the Lord." And Leo: "Not excluding the traitor even from the mystery⁴." But this opinion is not universal. St. Hilary says distinctly, "The Passover takes place by the taking of the Cup and breaking of Bread, without Judas the traitor. Nor could he drink with the Lord, who was not to drink in His Kingdom, which He promises that all they should do hereafter, who then drank of the 'fruit of

¹ 1 Cor. Hom. xxvii. 2.

³ Sermon. lxxi.

² In Joan. xxxii. 2.

⁴ Sermon. dlxxxiii.

the vine⁵." And in the Apostolical Constitutions, in the account given of the Last Supper, it is expressly stated that Judas was not present⁶.

Some apology seems necessary for venturing to adopt in this harmony an arrangement different from that on which the greater weight of authority seems to be, by introducing the departure of Judas before the appointment of the Eucharist altogether; not from considering this the best method, or from having any decided opinion on a subject on which not only do various persons differ, but probably the same person would differ from himself on different successive attempts to arrange it. It is necessary to adopt some plan; and this is acquiesced in, not as one free from objection, but as one that may be considered allowable, and which presents itself most readily, and unencumbered with difficulties.

And with regard to Judas not being present at the Eucharist, although it may be contrary to the general impression of the high authorities which have been mentioned, yet those writers do not appear to speak on the subject with any decided view, nor in any way as if it were a point which they had critically inquired into. The only case I am aware of where it does appear to be thus spoken of, is that of St. Augustin. But there appear to be two causes to which this prevailing notion is attributable; the one is from some confusion on the subject, arising from the sop given by our Lord to Judas, and the mysterious effect ascribed to it; and the other is the order of the narrative in St. Luke. St. Augustin alludes to both, but seems to have adopted his opinion from the latter. Speaking of the sop given to Judas, he says, in his Commentary on St. John, "It

⁵ In Matt.

⁶ Lib. v. cap. 14.

is not, as some suppose who read carelessly, that Judas then received the Body of Christ. But we must understand that the Lord had already distributed to them all the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, where Judas himself was, as Luke most clearly relates." Here St. Augustin alludes to the two circumstances, which appear to have given rise to a prevailing impression, that Judas was present, and states the testimony of St. Luke, as that on which he himself grounded his own opinion. And St. Chrysostom also does the same. But the general way in which it is spoken of by others, may indeed often be but an allusion to that sop, as it is referred to in our own Communion Service, and was, of itself, like a sacramental gift from our Lord. Thus Origen, in speaking of Satan entering into Judas on his receiving the sop, adds, "Perhaps, one may with some reason infer on this passage, that as he who eateth unworthily the Bread of the Lord, or drinketh His cup, eateth and drinketh to his own condemnation; for one and the same superior power, which is in the Bread and in the Cup, when a better disposition is subject to it, worketh that which is good; but when the worse, produceth condemnation. Thus the sop given by Jesus was of the same nature with that which was given to the rest of the Apostles, with the expression, "Take, eat;" but to them it was their salvation, to Judas unto condemnation; since "after the sop Satan entered into him'." Now from this passage it would appear, as if Origen himself hardly supposed Judas to have been present at the Eucharist. The supposition, therefore, as far as it is formed into a definite opinion, may be considered to rest on St. Luke's Gospel. But if we take the account in St. Matthew and St. Mark, in

7 In Joan. tom. xxxii.

conjunction with that in St. John (setting aside the consideration of St. Luke), it is clear on the comparison that Judas was not present. For in the two first Evangelists we have the account of the detection of Judas, with the circumstances of our Lord's declaration to him that he was the man, and the eating out of the same dish with him; and to this St. John, in giving an account of the same, adds, that he "immediately went out." And it is after that circumstance of Judas going out that St. Matthew and St. Mark proceed to speak of the Eucharist; which must, therefore, according to this literal order of circumstances, have taken place after his departure. Now, on examination of St. Luke's account, if a reason may be given why he there introduces the Eucharist out of the order of things, the whole will be found capable of an easy explanation, so as to reconcile any discrepancy between him and the other Evangelists; and this, I think, can be given. He proceeds to speak of the disclosure of the traitor, not before his account of the Eucharist, but immediately after. But it is clear that "the Cup," of which he had been speaking in the preceding account, at all events could not then have been given, for it says distinctly, "After Supper He took the Cup." And if "the Cup" did not take place till after, and is here introduced out of order, why not the Bread also? But now the circumstance of St. Luke introducing the mention of the appointment of the Eucharist in that place may be easily accounted for, although in fact it took place later. For it may be observed, that St. Luke here introduces the Bread and the Wine of the New Testament immediately after the Paschal supper, and the preparatory Cup of grace, or Cup of the Old Testament; from which it appears that his reason for then introducing the Eucharist was,

corresponding with, and the substitute for, those shadows of the Law that were then departing. There was a peculiar propriety in the mention of them at that time, though they might not have been given till towards the termination of the Supper, as these were at its commencement. And this will account in a very natural way for the words attached to the giving of the Cup, "Likewise after Supper," without our supposing from those words any great difference of time between that and the Bread. For as he had just spoken of the former Cup, it was but a natural introduction, to avoid confusion, to speak of the latter Cup as the one "after Supper;" whereas the Bread required no such distinctive expression, as he had not spoken of any other bread being given.

Two more slight points may be mentioned: when the Evangelist speaks of Judas going out, he adds, "And it was night:" from this expression it was probably but just the coming on of night, leaving ample room for the other events of that night. For the Eucharist is described as being at night: "Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took Bread." And again, although we should not give too much weight to mere rationalistic arguments, founded on what we may think it was likely that Christ would have done, independently of all evidence of what He has done; yet as subsidiary to that evidence it may be added, that when we are so much warned against giving the Sacred Elements to notorious sinners, it does not appear likely that He would have given His own Body and Blood to so wicked a man, known and detected, and impenitent, in the worst of crimes. Add to which, that where such a wonderful power is spoken of in the word as given to so unworthy a recipient; may it not be reverentially asked, Does it not seem to set that mysterious

gift above the Body and the Blood of the Lord, to attribute an efficacy to that which had not been found in the Eucharist, if then at that very time administered to him? It must be remembered, that it is at best but a choice of difficulties; every arrangement is liable to objections; but to render it in itself objectionable, it must be shown that the objections to it are greater or more numerous than they would be to any other method.

But the difficulty one finds in acquiescing unreservedly in the more general opinion of ancient writers is, that the giving of the Cup is, we are expressly told, "after Supper;" and that much of the discourse, which appears to have been at the Supper, is as if Judas was not present. The difficulty has given rise to an intermediate opinion, that the traitor might have gone out after receiving the Bread, but not the Wine. This would not be so much at variance with the impression of the Fathers, as they speak generally, and do not appear critically to have much examined the point; and though it may be by accident, yet they seem to allude more to the Bread. By this means also we shall still be able to take that expression, which our Lord Himself applies to Judas, from the Psalms, in its highest signification, "He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me." And, of course, it is possible that such a circumstance may have been ordered according to some great and Divine fitness, and significantly, as that Judas partook indeed of our Lord's Heavenly instruction, the Bread from Heaven; but yet had no advantage from His Blood. But the objections to this arrangement are, that it makes so great an interval, and events so important to intervene, between the Bread and the Cup, which does not seem intimated in Scripture: on the contrary, in all the accounts of the appointments they

are both placed together ; and one feels reluctant to "put asunder" at such intervals what God appears, if one may so speak, in some sense to have thus "joined together." Especially if the expression "after Supper" attached to the Cup, on which their separation is founded, appears rather intended as a distinction from the former Cup, than from the giving of the Bread. Add to which, it does not appear, I believe, that such an interval between the celebration of the two is alluded to by any ancient authority. And for these reasons we naturally connect the two together in our minds. But at all events, where the uncertainty appears to be so great, at what exact time they occurred, and no decisive opinion can be formed, it has been thought better to adhere to that connexion in which they are found in the four Scriptural accounts, so far as we can conveniently do so ; making only such a division between the two as the words of Scripture render necessary. For the expression, indeed, attached to the administration of the Bread, "as they were eating," would seem to indicate that it was before the termination of the Supper, and the words attached to the Cup indicate that it was after Supper ; and, therefore, it seems reasonable to suppose that some interval may have taken place. Now, if the Eucharist is arranged after the going out of Judas, it is difficult to place it anywhere but immediately before or amidst those discourses in the four chapters of St. John. And since the Cup was "after Supper," the remarkable expression which occurs in the middle of those discourses, of "Arise, let us go hence," supplies a natural place for the introduction of it. But as it was then clearly after Supper, and as the Bread was given "as they were eating," it renders it necessary to separate the Bread, at however short an interval ; and the commencement of the preceding

chapter, "Let not your heart be troubled," affords a natural place for introducing it. And, indeed, there is something very significative and impressive in supposing the Eucharist, amidst these discourses in St. John, apart from the unquiet and trying circumstances that preceded it; the betrayal of Judas, the self-confidence of St. Peter, and the reproofs connected with them. Add to which, the exceeding high nature of these discourses seems well suited to a time when, on His breaking of Bread, "their eyes were opened, and they knew Him;" their eyes were opened, not merely to know they were naked, but to see God, and be clothed by Him in His righteousness. Nor can any thing be conceived more of an Eucharistic character than those discourses,—mournful, indeed, as the "bitter herbs" at the Passover; but replete with Divine peace and joy, as in the act of passing over into the Heavenly Canaan.

There are also one or two other points on which harmonists are at variance. Some persons think that the dispute between the disciples mentioned in St. Luke could not have occurred at such a time, and must have been a previous circumstance there alluded to. But this is at variance with the sacred text; and so far from such a dispute being improbable at such a time, it is remarkable that the subject of our Lord's sufferings is that which, on two other occasions, is immediately followed by this conversation among the disciples, "which should be the greatest," very extraordinary as this must appear to us; and the mode in which St. Luke introduces it here is in remarkable accordance with the same on the other occasions. On one of these when our Lord, as they went, spoke most strongly of His sufferings, so much that it is said, "they were exceeding sorry^s," it was followed by a discussion

^s Matt. xvii. 23.

among themselves on their respective precedence, after which our Lord admonished them by setting before them a little child. And at another time⁹, when our Lord was dwelling on His approaching sufferings, and said that they should betray Him "to the Gentiles, to mock and to scourge and to crucify," it is added in the next verse, "Then came unto Him the mother of Zebedee's children, with her sons," requesting that they might be the first in His Kingdom; and the ten were angry when they heard it. Compare with these this passage at the Last Supper, when our Lord had spoken of His departure, and said, "Woe unto that man by whom He is betrayed," the account proceeds, "And they began to question among themselves which of them should do this thing; and there was also a strife among them which should be the greatest." I do not, therefore, venture to break this natural connexion of circumstances as it is in St. Luke. Add to which, that our Lord here has not merely been speaking of His sufferings, but of the immediate establishment of that kingdom in which He should eat and drink with them. There is, indeed, one circumstance that might have led one to suppose that it was previous to our Lord's washing His disciples' feet; for, if it occurred before, it would give this action an express signification with regard to themselves, similar to that of His taking a little child on the other occasion. But if the sacred text will not allow of this transposition, neither is this at all necessary; for an action of our Lord's may quite as well be supposed to be directed to the state of their heart, undeveloped in words and actions, as when it had come forth in those words. Add to which, that our Lord seems to allude to it in St. Luke as having taken place, "I am among you as he that doth serve."

⁹ Matt. xx. 19.

Again, in St. John's Gospel, taken by itself, after the washing of the disciples' feet, it is not very obvious what connexion the twentieth verse—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me"—has with what has gone before; and the two preceding verses beginning with, "I speak not of you all," have no very evident or necessary connexion with the preceding verse. This mention, therefore, of the Apostolic commission I would venture to place after a fuller mention of the same in St. Luke; the more so, as this very passage in St. Luke combines also the above-mentioned reference to the washing the feet of the disciples.

Another point is the prophecy respecting the denials of St. Peter. Some persons consider these four accounts as speaking of the same circumstance. But as there is an evident, though slight, discrepancy between the occasions which give rise to St. Peter's assertion in St. John, and that mentioned in St. Luke, both from each other, and from that recorded in the other two Evangelists; and as it would be quite in keeping with the three denials of St. Peter; I have ventured to consider that there were also three warnings. In like manner as God three times called upon the child Samuel. It is moreover in accordance with our Lord's usual practice of repeating His warnings very frequently—as to Judas—and in His foretelling of His Crucifixion, of which about nine instances are recorded. And it will be found when we come to arrange that subject, that the occasions and discourses that give rise to St. Peter's assertions are in themselves distinct and most natural, as considered separate. Still, as in other points, it must be allowed that the case is uncertain, and admits but of a choice of difficulties.

If on the contrary the declarations of St. Peter, and the

warnings that followed, should be arranged as one, we might place the whole passage in St. Luke beginning with "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you," so as to intervene before the warning in St. John, in the thirty-eighth verse, "Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake?" and after the affectionate discourse recorded in that Evangelist, between our Lord and St. Peter, which led to the circumstance. And again, after they had left the supper-room, and were proceeding to the Mount of Olives, at which time St. Matthew and St. Mark insert the assertion of St. Peter, and our Lord's warning, we must suppose that these two Evangelists are returning to something omitted before. And indeed not only does the word (τότε) "then," in St. Matthew, by which he introduces the narration, not imply (as we have more than once had occasion to notice) order of time; but here it is changed, in St. Mark, by dropping the word, and substituting that of (καί) "and." Such an arrangement may be correct which thus considers them as one; but where it is a matter of uncertainty, it seems better to arrange them as three distinct circumstances, in order to adhere more to the literal description of the Evangelists. For to consider them as one, not only does violence to the exact narrative of the sacred writers, but breaks that very natural and beautiful order of circumstances, which give rise to St. Peter's confidence on each occasion. Add to which, that the question of our Lord afterwards, "Simon, lovest thou Me?" thrice repeated, derives additional force from our supposing them to have reference not only to the three denials of St. Peter, but also to his three promises of fidelity, and three warnings of our Lord.

The writer is the more disposed to acquiesce in this arrangement from finding that St. Augustin is most

inclined to adopt the same in his Harmony of the Evangelists. He says, "For it is not incredible that at short intervals of time Peter was moved to presume, as he was also to deny; or that the Lord should have thrice answered him in a manner something similar; for after His resurrection, without the intervention of other circumstances or expressions, He thrice asked him whether he loved Him: and when he thrice returned Him the same answer, He also thrice gave him one and the same precept respecting feeding His sheep. And this supposition, that Peter thrice showed his presumption, and thrice heard from our Lord concerning his threefold denial, is proved to be the more credible from the very words of the Evangelists, which record both different circumstances, and a difference in the expressions of our Lord." St. Austin then proceeds to show that the occasions in St. John and St. Luke, when it occurs, are different; and still more in the other two Evangelists, when it is mentioned after the Hymn which they had sung, when they had gone forth. He afterwards speaks of this arrangement as more probable than that of considering all the accounts as one, but does not seem to have formed any very decided opinion on the subject.

SECTION VI

JUDAS PRESENT

OUR Lord had now resumed His garments, and was again sitting with them at the table, and, as St. John clearly intimates, He at this time again returns to the warning which He had already darkly introduced when washing their feet. "*But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth*

Me is with Me on the table. And truly the Son of Man goeth, as it was determined : but woe unto that man by whom He is betrayed !" (Luke.) These last words were probably the same as St. Matthew and St. Mark record a little later in the order of the narrative ;—although of course it would not be unnatural if we are to suppose our Lord to repeat them, and there is the high authority of Augustin for considering them as distinct. "*The Son of Man indeed goeth as it hath been written of Him ; but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed ! good were it for that man if he had not (or had never) been born*" (Matt., Mark). Fearful indeed and tremendous words ! enough to have arrested the traitor, and to have shaken them all to the depth of their inmost soul. But nothing is more remarkable than the effect which our Lord's words seem to have had upon His disciples about this time, as they appear to us, on account of our being well acquainted with what was about to happen to Christ, and of the spiritual nature of His Kingdom ; both of which were secrets which the disciples could not then understand : but the knowledge of which is to us a key to His words. St. Luke proceeds to mention this effect that it had on the Twelve, and alludes to a conversation which seems to have arisen among them ; for in considering which of them could be capable of such wickedness, they proceeded to the subject of their respective merits, and precedence in that Kingdom which they perceived was on the point of being established. "*And they began to question among themselves, which of them it was, who should do this thing*" (Luke). For they do not appear to have entertained any suspicion of the traitor, nor to have turned their thoughts to him in any way as a more likely person than another, but from the discussion to have passed imperceptibly into

a consideration of their comparative claims, for they were evidently upon the eve of some very great events. The circumstance itself of their sitting down formally, the Twelve with their Master, at a Feast in this manner, was in itself new, and had in it something more of ceremony and dignity than they had been accustomed to. And our Lord had been speaking of its being the last occasion of His thus being with them "until the kingdom of God shall come:" add to which, that this very mention of His sufferings was somehow connected intimately with approaching glory. *"And there was also a strife among them, which of them appeared to be the greater. But He said unto them, The Kings of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are in authority among them are called Benefactors"* (Luke). You are right in supposing that you are on the point of being established in My spiritual Kingdom over the world, in order to do good to mankind; but think not that from the benefits you shall confer on the world, you are to bring any credit or honour upon yourselves, for My Kingdom is of a far different character. *"Ye shall not be so. But He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For who is greater, he that reclineth at meat, or he that doth serve? Is it not he that reclineth at meat? but I am in the midst of you as one that doth serve"* (Luke). Our Lord had used very much the same words on a previous occasion, when a similar contest was taking place among them, and used the same expression of Himself being among them as one that doth serve¹. But on this occasion He takes pains not only to repeat the words, but by that impressive action to engrave as it were in living characters, and by the finger of the Holy Ghost, that

¹ Matt. xx. 26. Mark x. 44.

lesson on their heart. For those expressions in St. Matthew, as well as these now in St. Luke, seem like comments on that which had just taken place. These words would have lost very much of their significancy to us, if St. John had not afterwards recorded that action of our Blessed Lord, to which they seem evidently to allude ; and to which He had added, " If I therefore, your Master and Lord, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." Our Lord's words and actions often seem to have a connexion and reference to each other, in the same manner as His written Word and His Works have. And indeed another passage in St. Luke, where an allusion is clearly made to this significant action of Christ's, supplies us at once with the connexion between these circumstances, viz. His own humiliation and their dignity ; and explains why He should speak immediately afterwards respecting their sitting in His kingdom. " Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching : verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down, and shall come forth and serve them." Here our Lord represents Himself as serving, and His servants as sitting down at His table. And indeed the very washing itself had a connexion with and reference to it ; for that washing, as being our cleansing, sets us on high by His abasement (independently of any connexion it may have with their Apostolic consecration) : for He hath " washed us in His blood," and hath " made us Kings and Priests." And His next words, taken together with the preceding, exhibit the two circumstances in this beautiful and touching connexion—" *Ye are they who have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me ; that ye may eat and drink at My table*

in My Kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke).

In words very similar to these our Lord had spoken before, as recorded in St. Matthew's Gospel, in answer to St. Peter: "I say unto you, that ye who have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Where our Lord speaks of twelve thrones; and adds, as if in allusion to Judas, "But many that are first shall be last, and the last first;" on this occasion it is much worthy of notice that the number *twelve* is dropped. To whatever mysterious circumstance in the end these words may allude, we have now a typical resemblance of their fulfilment not only in the Apostles, but also, in some sense, in His Church generally; for our Lord has humbled Himself, and taken on Him the form, and died the death of a slave, in order that we may sit at His table, and partake of His Body and Blood. So hath He ministered unto us, even unto death.

Here our Lord does not forget His former warning and the presence of the traitor, but combines the mention of him with this subject also, if we may connect it with St. John's narrative. "*I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen.*" Think not that this failure of the twelve, this desertion of one of My chosen ones, is overreaching the Divine counsels; it is, on the contrary, the very fulfilment of them. "*But that the Scripture might be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me. Now I tell you, before it come to pass, that when it shall come to pass ye may believe that I am He*" (John). I tell you not this from expecting you to see that which now you cannot understand, but

that after it has happened you may be strengthened in your belief of Me. Here it may be asked, how this was to lead them to believe that our Lord was Christ? For this they had confessed already, and were blessed and accepted for doing so. But it proves that faith, even in the best of men, is progressive; for in one sense it may be said that they have not faith, which seems intimated in the expression, "If ye have faith, as a grain of mustard seed," and that it needed increase, as St. Peter prayed, "Lord, increase our faith;" and for want of faith they failed this night. Thus it is sometimes intimated that they have faith; at other times as distinctly that they have not: they had saving faith, but it needed increase in consistency, and strength, and depth, and fulness, and will ever do so in this world till the finite can comprehend the infinite.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me" (John). He that receives him whom Christ sends, receives Christ also; i. e. as to His human nature, as the Christ the Messiah of God; and he who thus receives Christ, receives or comes to know Him in His Divinity also; receives Him as God, and in so doing receives the Father. If in Peter you attend to Christ, you will find Christ; and in Christ the Father also. Thus it is taken by Origen and others. We may see it fulfilled in this, that they who receive Christ's Priests, as coming from Him, receive Him in His Holy Sacrament. And again, if he receives Christ he will receive the Father; for He says, "If any one keep My saying, My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

Thus had their Lord been instilling into them that

lesson of humility, which He had so seasonably taught them in washing their feet, for He had even then read their hearts; but gently allows and teaches that, with this humility, they were indeed as Apostles established on the thrones of His Kingdom. Still, throughout the whole of these discourses, He immediately returns to that subject which was most pressing and most near His heart, the loss of that disciple whom He earnestly endeavoured to snatch from that precipice to which he was hurrying. By washing his feet (by giving him, it may be, the bread of His Body), by speaking of the blessings of His Apostles, by eating out of the same dish with him, and by giving him with His own hand of His own meat,—by all these things successively He endeavoured to regain him, and afterwards by accepting of his kiss of friendship, and saying, “Friend, wherefore art thou come?” It is also very remarkable, how our Lord attempted from time to time, more or less, expressly to warn him. It was a year previously, as St. John notices, that our Lord spoke strongly of him, as “one of you hath a devil;” and, perhaps, it was occasioned by some secret theft or secret thoughts of Judas at the time, from which the Lord thus attempted to startle him. And now, at the Supper, He gently alludes to it, in words that perhaps Judas could alone understand. “Ye are not all clean;” and afterwards, “The hand that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table;” then pointing out the Scripture, “he that eateth bread with Me;” and then by being “troubled in spirit;” and in His distress speaking more openly and clearly than before, when He testified and said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me.” And then indicating to Judas himself His knowledge of him, “Thou hast said.”

And here a difficulty may occur to us: Why should our Lord have taken such unwearied pains in endeavouring to save this wicked man, while He, knowing all things, well knew that it would be finally all in vain; for that he would betray Him? Now this is precisely the same difficulty which occurs in God's natural providence and government of the world, respecting the existence and continuance of evil; for why should the Almighty suffer those to be born, and to be elected into His Church, and even into His ministry, whom He foreknows will be evil? But the thing to be observed is, that notwithstanding these speculations, our Lord's conduct to Judas is precisely the same as His dealings with the Jews in the Old Testament, and with individual Christians in the present day. The exact counterpart may be found in the Prophets in God's expostulations, and warnings, and remonstrances, and affectionate forbearings and chastenings, with His impenitent people; whom, notwithstanding, He did not stop in their career; yet continued to deal with them as if, humanly speaking, He did not foreknow their impenitence. The same is evidently the case to a most amazing degree with individual Christians, as the experience of any one may testify to him; though a sinner bent on any evil course cannot perceive it like Judas: yet, on the retrospect, when passion has subsided, they may generally see very much. I mean that the voice of God and the hand of God is about his path and about his bed, thus dealing with him by warnings and kindnesses.

Now therefore that our Lord was speaking of His twelve Apostles, and of the blessing of those who should receive them, and looked on that little company that had been with Him from the beginning, it became more and

more necessary distinctly to separate the traitor from that little band, who had been looking around on each other with fear and distrust. St. Matthew and St. Mark speak of it generally—"While they were reclining" (Mark), "and eating" (Matt., Mark); but St. John, "When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said"—in clear and distinct words that they could not but understand,—"*Verily*" (John), "*verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me*" (Matt., Mark, John). "*He that eateth with Me*" (Mark). "*And they were exceeding sorrowful*" (Matt.), or "*began to be sorrowful*" (Mark): "*and every one of them*" (Matt.), or "*one by one*" (Mark), "*to say unto Him*" (Matt., Mark), perhaps each in a suppressed and timid manner appealing half secretly, "*Lord*" (Matt.), "*Is it I?*" (Matt., Mark). "*And another, Is it I?*" (Mark).

The disciples around the table, who appear not to have apprehended Him before, were filled with awful consternation at these words; at the thought that one out of their own number should be found to betray Him; and also each for himself was distressed and alarmed, knowing the frailty of our nature, the powers of evil with which we have to contend, and above all things, knowing better than they knew their own hearts, the certainty and truth of our Lord's words; and while in this fear and anxiety, each was asking for himself, "*Is it I?*" Judas had not as yet, perhaps, ventured to put that question. But no one seems to evince so much anxiety as St. Peter himself, partly from the holy ardour and affection of his character, and partly from a sort of half distrust of himself and unconscious uneasiness at heart; the very circumstance which afterwards, when he is relieved of his fear, makes him so full of assertion and self-confidence; which is very

natural. However that may be, while they were all in this suspense and uncertainty, St. John records a circumstance which probably occurred without the notice of the others. "*Now there was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of the disciples, whom Jesus loved.*" This expression of reclining on the bosom, although it is a form of expression taken from the mode of reclining on the dinner couch, and, as indicating the place next to the head, signifies the place of honour; yet it seems to imply affectionate intimacy, and may be taken spiritually to include a communicating or imparting of secrets, and intimate knowledge. Such as was the case with the beloved disciple, who came to know beyond others the mysteries of Divine love. "There is in fact here," says St. Augustin, "some latent meaning, and which pertains to the bosom on which he reclined, who was speaking these things. For by the bosom what is signified but that which is secret?" And, indeed, something of this kind seems to be intended by the use of this expression in Holy Scripture. Thus it is said, "The only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him;" and of Lazarus, that he was "carried by Angels into Abraham's bosom." "*Simon Peter, therefore,*" not wishing to speak so as to be heard aloud by the other disciples, and being always, St. Chrysostom observes, "full of zeal, and of great intimacy with John," privately "*beckons to him to inquire who he might be of whom He spake*" (John). For as God revealed His secrets unto Abraham expressly because of his faithful obedience, as our Lord said that they were His friends who did what He commanded them, and as the friend knoweth what his Lord doeth; therefore, no secret can be withheld from the disciple of Divine love. "*He, therefore, that reclined on Jesus' breast saith unto Him,*

Lord, who is it? Jesus answers, He it is to whom I will give the sop, when I have dipped it." Words which appear not to have been heard either by the rest of the disciples, nor by Judas; and the act was, perhaps, meant as the last act of kindness and token of affection on our Lord's part to Judas. "*And when He had dipped the sop He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon*" (John).

It seems not improbable that this circumstance, as more particularly detailed in St. John, may be the same as that which is recorded in more general terms by St. Matthew and St. Mark. The account, indeed, in those Evangelists might appear, at first sight, as if it was said in the hearing of them all; and although certainly the expression of "one that dippeth with Me in the dish," might only be a pointing it out to be one of four or five, and so only limiting it more than the expression, "one of the twelve;" yet it rather seems to signify one particular person, "he that dippeth:" now this, if openly spoken, would have disclosed the traitor to them all; whereas it is evident from what St. John afterwards states, that when Judas left the room he was not suspected by them generally. The words of the two first Evangelists are, that in answer to their anxious inquiry, "Is it I?" "*He answered and said*" (Matt., Mark) "*unto them, It is one of the twelve*" (Mark). "*He that dippeth (his hand,*" Matt.) "*with Me in the dish*" (Matt., Mark), "*the same shall betray Me*" (Matt.). But now that which is mentioned in St. John is a conversation that takes place between our Lord, St. John, and St. Peter, and passes quite without the knowledge of the rest. It may be that the former Evangelists only record more generally, and St. John more particularly, this circumstance of extreme aggravation, that it was not only one of the twelve, but one with whom such familiarity

and intimacy at the table had existed ; even a greater aggravation in the East than it would be considered among our customs. This, therefore, which these three Gospels mention, must have taken place privately ; but then we must suppose that at the same time our Lord declared aloud, and in the hearing of the rest, the startling words which St. Matthew and St. Mark here add, "The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him : but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed !" Unless we suppose these words to have been spoken, as I have ventured to introduce them, in another place. Perhaps Judas himself did not understand that he was thus marked out by our Lord to St. John when He gave him the sop ; but as the others had been asking our Lord whether He spake of them, while Judas hung back and hesitated to do so, now, from agitation, that he might not appear particular, or perhaps from a hardened shamelessness, and instigated by our Lord's speaking to him ;—or it may be gaining confidence by that last act of kindness to him ;—and probably in a more subdued tone, and to prevent notice ;—he puts the same question. "*Judas who betrayed Him answered and said, Master, is it I ? He saith unto him, Thou hast said*" (Matt.).

All this, therefore, which is recorded in St. Matthew and St. Mark, we suppose to have taken place at the very time when our Lord gave Judas the sop, as St. John mentions, and to have been coincident with it. However that may be, we must now return to the narrative in St. John, where Christ, in answer to the question of that beloved disciple, gave "the sop" to Judas Iscariot. In whatever way the circumstance may have taken place, some very mysterious and extraordinary effect is produced on him at this moment of giving the sop, for the account

proceeds, "*And after the sop, then Satan entered into him.*" It does not appear what was the immediate cause of this offence; whether it was that it was accompanied with the answer mentioned in St. Matthew, implying that he was detected; or whether there was something in our Lord's notice of him that filled the traitor with anger and revenge; or whether it was something supernatural and Divine, in the unspeakable gift of our Blessed Lord's attention, when He gives to eat with His own Divine hand, that if unworthily received, it becomes so dangerous. Thus Origen² takes it, and applies to it the words, "from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have" in God's visitation; and "if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it; but if the son of peace be not there, your peace shall return unto you again³;" for Judas, he observes, is described as "the man of peace⁴." And Augustin, "That which he received was good, but he received it to his own evil, being evil, and receiving it with an evil mind. For good things become injurious, and evil things become beneficial, according as those may be to whom they are given. Why, therefore, should you wonder, if the bread of Christ was given to Judas by which he was enslaved to the devil; when you see on the other hand that to Paul was given an angel of the devil, by which he might be made perfect in Christ? So both good was hurtful to the bad man, and evil was profitable to the good man⁵." This indeed is the case with all God's visitations, that they are "a savour of life and also unto death." And of Judas especially it is said, "Let their table be made a snare to take themselves withal; and the things that should have

² In Evan. Joan. tom. xxxii. 14.

³ Luke x. 6.

⁴ Ps. xli. 9. Sept. Ver.

⁵ Comm. in Joan. Tr. lxii.

been for their wealth, be unto them an occasion of falling."

It must be observed how Scripture connects all with spiritual agencies; it is not a bad design, and then a desperate and wrathful resolve, and a giving way of good principles; but it is Satan putting it into his heart, and then Satan taking possession. Long before he was "a devil," one bent on evil; and when in this state first the thought is by Satan shot into his heart, then he takes possession, hurries him headlong into crime, then to remorse, and then to despair. "Observe," says Origen, "that on the former occasion Satan entered not into Judas, but only put it into his heart to betray his Master; but after the sop he entered in. Wherefore let us also be watchful, lest the devil cast into our heart any one whatever of his fiery darts; for if he has done so, he watches his time after that, that he himself may enter." But St. Austin: "Satan entered into him before, as into one belonging to another, to tempt him, but now to possess him for his own."

"Jesus, therefore, saith unto him, What thou doest, do quickly." None can divine the import of these words. Origen thinks it doubtful whether they were spoken to Judas or to Satan, who was taking possession of him, but that they refer to that faithful resolve in our Lord, which is often expressed of Him in the Psalms, as "Though an host of men were laid against Me, yet shall not My heart be afraid; and though there rose up war against Me, yet will I put My trust in Him." "He was looking," says Origen, "to him that entered and to him that received him, and to all their design against Him; and baring Himself for the contest, in order to obtain victory for the salvation of mankind against the evil one, He said, 'What

thou doest, do quickly.'” St. Augustin, also, says that He spake, not urging but foretelling, for the salvation of others. St. Chrysostom, as reproving and showing that He would not hinder him. “O expression of willingness,” says Augustin, “rather of one prepared than of one angry. Not in wrath for the destruction of the perfidious one, but in haste for the salvation of the faithful, for He was delivered for our offences, and loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.” But with regard to the traitor himself, how mysterious seem the words, by a most awful and unsearchable judgment giving him leave to go on, by saying to him at the moment that he was setting out, “What thou doest, do quickly.” Thus as Satan, according to the Eastern proverb, is always for hastening things, yet it can only be that God permits him to do so, when wicked men are given up to his power: when this permission is given all is lost. “And straightway Jesus gave them leave, and the unclean spirits entered into the swine, and the herd rushed down a steep place into the sea.”

The words were spoken aloud to Judas, and were overheard by the disciples, who heard nothing of what had passed between our Blessed Lord and St. John, and even now seem to have had no suspicion of the traitor. “*But no one of those who sat at meat knew for what intent He spake this unto him. For some thought, since Judas had the bag, that Jesus was saying to him, Buy those things that we have need of for the feast ; or, that he would give something to the poor.*”

“*He therefore, when he had taken the sop immediately went out. And it was night*” (John). And well may we apply the Apostle’s expression—he went out from us, for he was not of us, or no doubt he would have continued

with us. He went out, not only from the house, but from Jesus, in Whom there is "light and no darkness at all." And it was night. "It was night," says Augustin, "when he went out; and he that went out himself was night." It was night without, and tenfold night within; and the night without was but an emblem of that darkness which is without the Marriage feast, when the door has been closed, and he that had not on the wedding garment is cast out, "into outer darkness." The reason why he immediately went out, Origen supposes, was because "Satan, who after the sop had entered into Judas, could not endure that he should continue in the same place with Jesus: for Christ hath no agreement with Belial." And he afterwards adds: "For the sop had a beneficial power for him that would avail himself of it; but he that had once put it into his heart to betray his Master, fearing lest that which he had put into his heart should be thrown out by that efficacy of the sop, entered into him; so that when our Lord said 'What thou doest, do quickly,' and Judas took the sop, 'he immediately went out.'"

SECTION VII

ST. PETER WARNED

THE conversation which now ensues is in the highest degree interesting and worthy of all adoration, as it is given by that disciple who all the while lay on his Lord's breast, and, doubtless, ever remembered in the Holy Ghost all the differences which marked our Lord's discourse, tone, and demeanour throughout the remainder of

that supper after the departure of Judas. The very first words are as if a weight of agony was removed, and, humanly speaking, all the force of our Lord's affections burst forth, when that little faithful company were alone, and the traitor was departed: his departure, moreover, brought near our Lord's own death, His final taking leave of those His chosen friends, and the redemption of the world. All these things rush together on this moment of release from the presence of the traitor: the consummation of God's glory—the bereavement of His friends—His last ordinance of love, the type, and more than the type, of that love which shall be at the marriage Supper of the Lamb. Our Lord's expressions at once seem to describe that Glory of Christ which will be at the final separation, when the evil one being cast out, He shall be alone with His Saints. "Something like this will it be," says Augustin, "when overcome by Christ, this world shall have passed away, and no unclean person shall remain among the people of Christ."

"When, therefore, he went out, Jesus saith, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him." It may be doubted to what the words of "the Son of Man" being "glorified" do immediately refer. St. Augustin seems to apply them rather to our Lord's Resurrection¹, and the words "shall straightway glorify Him," he thinks speak of His soon rising again. For our Lord's sufferings were His humiliation and abasement, and it was His Glory that ensued; for the Evangelist thus speaks of His Resurrection, "For the Spirit was not yet given, because Christ was not yet glorified;" and His Resurrection was clothing human

¹ In Joan. Tr. lxiv. 1.

nature in the Son of Man with immortality. But the words may apply to our Lord's humiliation also, as that whereby He glorified God, and God was glorified in Him, by which men were brought to know Him, and so to glorify God; which was the beginning of His kingdom of Glory, as "the sign of the Son of Man" is connected with His appearing in Glory. And our Lord had thus before spoken of His sufferings as the Son of Man being "glorified²." By His death He glorified God, having "spoiled principalities and powers," and "triumphed over them by His Cross." In the Cross alone St. Paul gloried; and if men are to glorify God by their works, much more shall the Son of Man glorify Him by His most perfect obedience even unto death.

Now is the Son of Man glorified, for "the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing" in Him, but one born of Adam shall fulfil all righteousness; and thus God shall be glorified in Him, by His Love that gave and accepted that Sacrifice. And if God is thus glorified in the Son of Man, He will glorify Him also in Himself as Son of Man; by bringing all men unto Him, for no man can come unto Him except the Father draw him; by exalting Him unto the right Hand of God, Angels, and principalities, and powers, being subject unto Him; and this He will immediately proceed to do. What is fulfilled in our Lord is fulfilled in His members, for by their obedience God is glorified; and if God is glorified in them, He will glorify them also in themselves, and set them on His right hand. This His humiliation, and this act of Judas which immediately led to His death, was the coming in of that dispensation whereby God was glorified: the breaking of Christ's Body on the Tree was the rending of the veil, whereby the glory of God entered into the

² See p. 68.

Christian Temple ; and was the opening of the Holiest of Holies, of Heaven itself to us ; and the glory that fills the Church is Christ, who is "the Image of the invisible God." We read that of old "The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, and Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." But the entering in of that visible glory was but the feeble type of "the glory revealed in us ;" which is so far greater than the glory of the Law that it throws it into the shade, as the sun does the stars. For "if the ministration of death was glorious, which glory was to be done away, how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious ? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more shall the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory." "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory," says St. John ; and beholding His glory, says St. Paul, we are "changed into the same Image from glory to glory." In some exceeding high sense, therefore, and of which all these were but the expressions or emanations, was Jesus Christ now to be glorified as Son of Man, and God to be glorified in Him ; He was to glorify Him in Himself as Son of Man ; and that even now : by His obedience unto Death ; by His Resurrection from the dead ; by His Ascension into Heaven, and being set on the right hand of God ; and also, it may be added, at the consummation of the world, when "He shall present unto Himself a glorious Church," "when He shall come in His own Glory, and the Glory of His Father."

"Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me ; and as I said unto the Jews, Where I go, ye cannot come : so now I say unto you." Such were the

touching words of affectionate valediction, as He now drew them near unto Himself as friends, and no more as servants; words which seem to have ever rested on the ears and heart of this Evangelist, for "little children" was ever afterwards his own expression of endearment. The words which He had spoken twice to the Jews He again repeats a third time, but in another sense; for the Jews could not come to the place whither He went, for they would "die in their sins;" but His disciples could not, on account of His departure from the world to the Father. "Yet a little while;" for it was but for a few hours more that He would thus converse with them, as one partaking of human infirmities; and thus He spoke afterwards of this His mortal condition, as "while I was yet with you." And "a little while," for a few days, was it in another sense, when He would be visible among them, and speak of the things concerning His Kingdom till His Ascension. And "a little while," for a few years, would He, after another manner, be with them in the Spirit even unto the end; for this also would be but for "a little while."

But this His new and Spiritual Presence in His Church would depend on that new law of love, which He was going to leave with them, as His last and best legacy; "for where two or three are gathered together in His name," there will He be "in the midst of them." And He promises that with him who will keep this His last commandment of love, He will Himself come to make His abode. Of this, therefore, the condition of His Presence, unknown to mortal sense, He proceeds to speak, "*A new commandment I give you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have*

love one to another." Love, indeed, was in one sense an old commandment, for to love our friends was the precept of the Jewish Law, and of Gentile philosophy, and one of the chief virtues in heathen morals ; but to love as Christ hath loved us, to love our enemies, this is a law proceeding from the Cross of Christ ; this love, which flowed like a stream from the stricken Rock, was new to the world : of this law of meekness no Gentile philosopher had ever spoken. And it is the true badge of the Christian profession, for it can only be taught by the Anointing of the Spirit, and can be no counterfeit. There is a selfish love, and a love from party zeal, and often a false appearance of love ; there is a natural love : but love like the love of Christ, which is self-denying even unto death, this is the most genuine proof of the true Christian. "These are the steps," says St. Austin, "by which Christ is to be followed ;" thus may they seek Him, and find Him indeed,—and come to be where He is. This is the new commandment for those who are made new,—who have put on the new man,—are heirs of the New Testament,—singers of the new song,—who drink of the new wine in the Kingdom ; not as men love each other, or husbands their wives, parents their children, or friends each other : but as the children of the Most High, who are brethren to His only Son, loving each other with that love wherewith He has loved us ; this is that love which, as said in the Canticles, is "strong as death," which overcometh death, and partaketh of that life which is hid with Christ in God. And this is the fulfilment of the first commandment also, for he who holily and spiritually loveth his neighbour, what else doth he love in him, as St. Austin says, but God ? This is the love which is distinguished from all worldly love, in being like the love of Christ ; for what

else did He love in us but God? Not that we had, but that we might have Him within us, and that He might lead us unto that place, where God may be All in All.

But as the Jews before, when the Lord spake of going where they could not follow Him, took up and inquired the meaning of such mysterious words, so now does St. Peter, but with a far different spirit. For as his Lord had spoken of His going away, and of leaving them, and of the greatness of His love, the ardent zeal of St. Peter would not be left behind. The same earnest love, which if conscious of frailty and endued with strength from above, would have fitted him to be the first of Apostles, had always made him forward beyond the rest in the service of his Lord; as when he walked on the sea, and began to deprecate our Saviour's meeting with suffering, and when he would not allow Him to wash his feet. This it is which now prompts him to venture beyond others in his desire to follow Him; it was this which his Lord wished afterwards rather to control and strengthen than to deprecate, when He said, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" For this love, when it leaned on its own strength, only led him to more signal failings than others; but hereafter he shall be "much forgiven and loving much," and through suffering he shall be made "perfect in love." "*Simon Peter saith unto Him, Lord, whither goest Thou?*" Not wishing to know this, so much as, suspecting that our Lord spoke of death or some great trial, to express his determination not to desert Him. Our Lord answers, as St. Chrysostom says, not to his words, but to the thoughts of his heart. "*Jesus answered him, Whither I go thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me afterwards.*" In great love and tenderness, not rejecting his devout wish, but speaking of a

time when at last he should be so strengthened, as to be able to follow even unto death, and a death so terrible: taking up the better part of His disciple's words, which should indeed be fulfilled beyond the thought of the speaker; in like manner as He did when St. John and St. James expressed their power to drink of His Cup, and be baptized with His Baptism. "*Peter*," not aware of his own weakness and need of strength from above, "*saith unto Him, Lord, why am I unable to follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake.*" Here was a challenge on the part of human nature, in its very best estate, to do something like that which Christ was going to do: to love as He loved us; and "here was shown," as Augustin says, "that the most zealous of men and chief of Apostles has not love sufficient to lay down his life for his friend. Christ surveyed him as the physician does the sick man, when he has the will to do that which he has no power to perform." "Our Lord wished to show us," says the same writer, "in the chief of Apostles what human strength, trusting to itself, could do." "*Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow until thou shalt deny Me thrice;*" or, as we may perhaps interpret it, before the cock-crowing or rise of the morning. Not as if once only, by a sudden surprise or under overwhelming impulse, but shalt thrice repeat thy denial of Me.

It has been before observed, that when our Lord was speaking of Judas, it was St. Peter who was so earnest to know who it was; and that, when his uneasiness was removed, being relieved, and self-satisfied, he became even the more self-confident. This St. Chrysostom notices in his Commentary on St. Matthew, and also in that on St.

John, that when our Lord said that one of them should betray Him, though his conscience did not accuse him, yet he asked with apprehension; but when released from his anxiety on that subject, he assumes a tone of confidence. The whole history is highly instructive, as the account of the natural man, where "the spirit is ready, but the flesh is weak." There is first of all an expostulation of strong affection, "Lord, Thou shalt never wash my feet;" then a secret misgiving betrayed in his apprehension about the traitor; then the re-action of self-confidence, still increasing as the evening advanced, in the midst of our Lord's pathetic and affectionate discourses; for his third declaration, after leaving the Supper-room, is stronger than the preceding; then follows slothfulness in prayer, for which our Lord reproved him by name in the Garden, "Simon, sleepest thou?" then the witnessing our Lord's extreme humiliation and agony, which led him perhaps to forget His Divine power, when he attempted by his own sword to help Him; then follows his Lord's apparently helpless captivity and ill usage, and St. Peter's trial in the hall of the Chief Priest.

Reasons have been already mentioned for considering this warning to St. Peter, as three times repeated on this evening, and that the Evangelists are not all speaking of the same circumstance. The first has been considered to be that of St. John, which we have just spoken of; the second, that of St. Luke; and the third, that which is mentioned by both St. Matthew and St. Mark. There will be little difficulty in distinguishing this latter from the other two, as both St. Matthew and St. Mark introduce the account, after they had sung a hymn and gone forth to the Mount of Olives. In St. Luke and St. John there is a difference in the circumstances which give rise

to St. Peter's assertion, and in each case the conversation is readily detached from the context, so as to allow of their being placed here together in succession. In St. John this declaration of our Lord's to St. Peter terminates the thirteenth chapter ; and the fourteenth chapter commences without any necessary or obvious connexion with the preceding. And in St. Luke it is easily disconnected from what goes before, for indeed St. Luke appears to introduce it without any reference to the previous narrative, by simply saying, "And the Lord said."

Here then we may suppose some conversation to have intervened, respecting the severe trial which was coming on all the disciples, and proceeding thus : "*And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath earnestly sought to have you,*" i. e. all of you, My disciples, "*to sift you as wheat,*"—an emblem often applied in Scripture to strong temptation, and having a reference to the Old Testament, for the figure is more than once used in the Prophets. "*But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith may not fail.*" For indeed it shall be deeply eclipsed, and on the very point of entire failure, and were it not for the intercession of Christ, and His earnest entreaty to him to watch and pray, and His searching look, like His hand held out on the sea, he would have sunk irrecoverably. "*And do thou, when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*" It was the same command which our Lord afterwards gave, "Feed My sheep." And here perhaps we may have revealed to us some of the dealings of mysterious providence ; when Satan is bent to have His disciples, by means of one He strengthens the others ; and even that one He allows to fall into temptation, that by this means he may know himself, and seek that aid which can alone support him. Here we find that

conversion is not a thing accomplished once for all, but that St. Peter long after his "name" had been "written in Heaven;" and Christ had pronounced him "blessed," and the Father had revealed Christ unto him; and our Lord had washed his feet; and he had partaken of His Body and Blood; yet he still needed conversion; a change from self-confidence to greater humility. St. Chrysostom seems to think that our Lord's saying "I have prayed for thee," indicated that St. Peter had more need than the others of our Lord's prayers, on account of the heinousness of his fall, which he considers as aggravated, first by his denying his Lord's word, then by preferring himself before the others, and thirdly by his ascribing all to himself; and he thinks it was in St. Peter a part of that malady of pride which our Lord had been reproving in them all³. Indeed, it shows the great need of that timely lesson in washing His disciples' feet. Observe also, that all this depends on the intercession of Christ; as when a tree has withered externally from rough blasts, yet by the dew of God the root is kept alive, and again puts forth its strength. By this prayer of Christ's His Church is saved, for by this prayer St. Peter is preserved, and through him the other Apostles, and through them the whole Church of God. "It is not of Apostles only it is spoken," says Theophylact, "that they should be strengthened by St. Peter, but of all the faithful, to the end of the world, from the example of the mercy shown to him. Admire, therefore," he says, "the exuberance of Divine patience, which, to preserve the Apostle from distrust, even before he had committed his crime, had bestowed his pardon, and restored him to his Apostleship, by saying, 'Strengthen thy brethren.'"

³ In Matt. Hom. lxxxiii. 3.

And it is well paraphrased in Bede, "As I, by My prayer, have preserved thy faith from failure, so do thou remember to support thy weaker brethren, that they also despair not of pardon." Here, moreover, we see in operation one of the great mysteries of our Faith; for Christ, as Man and as our High Priest, is supplicating the Father for that which, as God, He could command and give; indeed, had already commanded and given; for He had already, as St. Chrysostom observes, said, "Upon this rock will I build My Church; and I give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven." Thus His humiliations and prayers of intercession were already becoming, as it were, a part of His Passion and Sacrifice.

St. Peter, perceiving still more clearly from our Lord's declaring that he should deny Him, that danger, if not death, were certainly approaching, and that in that danger he would himself have to take part, again repeats, with deliberate resolution, what before he had earnestly exclaimed. "*He said unto Him, Lord, with Thee I am ready to go both unto prison and unto death. But He said,*" as if repeating emphatically His previous statement, "*I say unto thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day,*"—the day "in which the Passover must be slain" having now begun, and ending on the following evening,—"*the cock shall not crow this day before thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me.*" I will not say deny Me, as I said before, deny Me as thy Master, My Divine claims and doctrine, but actually "deny that thou knowest Me."

As our Lord had been intimating the approach of circumstances of sore trial, He now proceeds to dwell on the necessity of earnest watchfulness to them all. "*And He said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and sandals, were ye in want of any thing?*"

And they said, Of nothing." As if He had said, when I commanded you to cast aside every thing of human means, and to lean and trust on Me alone, did you not find that My promise was made good? Let such be a proof to you of My power; but now I shall be withdrawn from you, I shall appear to fail you: now is the time of exceeding trial approaching, of a struggle even unto death, when you must sell your garment to buy a sword; must cast aside all provisions or thoughts of temporal life to summon energy for the struggle. "*And He said unto them, But now he that hath a purse let him take it, and likewise his scrip; and he that hath it not, let him sell his garment and buy a sword. For I say unto you, that this which is written must yet be accomplished in Me, And He was numbered with the transgressors. For the things concerning Me have an end. And they said, Lord, behold here are two swords,*"—which some suppose were the knives which had been used for the Paschal Supper,—"*He said unto them, It is enough.*" Thus were they taught by Him in the very strongest manner, that a time of great danger was at hand. But did our Lord imply, that as they had before depended on His Divine protection, that they were now to depend on their own human means? This we cannot suppose. Or does He intend that they were really to procure a sword? or even if He had, would there have been an opportunity for any man to sell his garment and purchase one before the coming of the traitor? "Dost Thou command Me, O Lord," says St. Ambrose, "to buy a sword, Who forbiddest Me to strike? Why dost Thou prescribe the having of that which Thou forbiddest to be drawn?" "What is this?" says St. Chrysostom, "He Who had said, 'If any one shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn

unto him the other also,' now arms His disciples." Yet there hardly appears a sufficient reason even for the disciples to have taken the word literally, for there is something else implied even in the words; for first He says to all of them, "Let him that hath not a sword sell his garment and buy one;" and yet, on their showing the swords, He says that two are enough: surely not enough for self-defence, "for if He wished them to rely on human aid, a hundred swords," says St. Chrysostom, "would not have been enough. And if He wished to arm them, it would have been requisite to possess not a sword alone, but shields and helmets. And a thousand of these would not have been sufficient to protect them from all they would have to undergo from people and nations; but by speaking of swords, He alludes to the approaching assaults of the Jews." But in whatever way the disciples might have understood the words, may not the very expression, "It is enough," (*ικανόν ἐστι*) be supposed rather to deprecate the sword altogether? For the same or similar expressions (*ικανούσθω*), in the Septuagint⁴ are translated as declining, or "it is too much." "It is too much for you," says Jeroboam, "to go to Jerusalem," as deprecating their going, and requesting them not to go at all. As if it had been said, "No, I need not such, it is enough, you will understand Me hereafter; I can say no more to explain it now."

But although something like this may have been the true meaning of our Lord's words, yet still it might appear as a difficulty, that they were misunderstood by the disciples, or at least imperfectly understood. In answer to this it might be observed, that it may be, that

⁴ 1 Kings xii. 28. Gen. xxxiii. 15. Numb. xvi. 7.

when the Almighty speaks, from the profound depths of His words, they are always but inadequately comprehended. For not only in the Law and the Prophets, and through His natural and moral providence, God speaks to man in a manner that must be more or less dark and obscure, and also frequently throughout the Gospels: but consider only the case of the disciples at this Supper. How very much was there of which they must have had but a very imperfect comprehension, and indeed almost none at all, and therefore a misconception with respect to its real import, as it was afterwards revealed to them? The appointment, for instance, of the Eucharist, must have been quite beyond any notion which they could have entertained at the time, when they had little conception of our Lord's death, and perhaps none at all of His Propitiatory Sacrifice, Mediation, and Priesthood: or that they were already eating of that Sacrifice, which was to be made on that day. Or again, let these words under consideration be taken in connexion with the preceding promises and privileges, which our Lord had spoken of, that they should "eat and drink at His table, in His Kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." All that could be understood from this was, that they would occupy situations of great eminence and importance in the Church. To check the effect, therefore, of such high thoughts, our Lord now sets before them the approach of dangers so great, that they could neither depend on His succour in the same manner as they did before, while He was visibly present among them; nor on the good will of man, as affording them temporal support in return for spiritual benefits. But in both cases it is expressed by a figure, which might at the time have

been misunderstood; for neither now do they literally sit on thrones in Christ's earthly kingdom, nor then did they need a purse and sword, as they might have then supposed. "For," says Theophylact, "as they were disputing before of their prerogatives, 'It is not,' He says, 'a season for prerogatives, but of dangers; for I, your Master, am led to no honourable death, but to be numbered with transgressors.'" And as St. Chrysostom beautifully observes, "As they who teach to swim, at first lend a sustaining hand and support their learners, but afterwards, withdrawing their hand, command them to support themselves, and even allow them a little to sink; so did Christ to His disciples. In their beginnings He was ready at hand with them, supplying them abundantly with all things. But now that it was necessary for them to show their strength, by little and little, He withdraws His aid, commanding them to act for themselves." And all this, as their general import, they might have apprehended from these His words.

But then it may be said, Were not our Lord's words not only inadequately comprehended, but even misunderstood, so much as to give rise to St. Peter's use of the sword in the garden? Now this may be always the case when Divine words are imperfectly understood, that they are also in some degree wrongly understood; and that from imperfection of faith. For this use of the sword in St. Peter was the want of an adequate sense of our Lord's Divine Power. Yet even this error of St. Peter turned out in the event to be conducive to the great ends of setting forth the meekness of Christ, and the edification of the Church. Still, after all that can be said, there is great difficulty in the passage; and the comments of the Fathers on it are so diverse, that it

does not appear possible to extract any one opinion by consent.

But it may be humbly asked, May not the whole passage be spoken prophetically, of the future history of the Church? For the first ministers of Christianity were sent forth without any earthly means; they sold all that they had, and depended entirely on the providence of God; and found that His promises did not fail them; as they now answer, they went forth without purse or scrip, and yet they needed nothing. But in the later times of the Church each should take his purse and scrip, and above all the temporal sword of state protection for their defence; but the use of it should not profit the cause of Christ. And indeed St. Basil, though he does not allude to this interpretation, yet thinks it may have been spoken prophetically and imperatively; in fact the Divine command is often equivalent to prophecy. In this interpretation also there will be much instruction, for they who first gave up all needed nothing; they who now take the sword fail in their maintenance of Christ's religion; and the use of it in His cause is afterwards deprecated by our Lord. It may further imply, that they who depend on such means as scrip and purse will have to defend them by the sword. Theophylact also takes it as prophetic, but applies it to the Jewish nation. Of course, any prophetic allusion of this kind, that it may contain, does not detract from the meaning of the words, as addressed on the occasion to the disciples.

SECTION VIII

THE BREAD

AND now, as it is ever the custom of God, when He takes away any thing from His Elect, to restore it unto them in another form and in infinite abundance; and as of that Paschal Supper and the Cup of the Old Covenant He was to drink no more; He proceeds to establish the covenant of the New, which was no less than His own Body and Blood. The disciples could not, we may suppose, at the time have fully understood the meaning of this action; but when they found that our Lord was indeed the true Sacrifice for the sins of the world, offered up on the Cross at the accustomed time of offering, then doubtless His words would have come to their memory in all their full import;—that as the Priests had ever been commanded to partake of their Sacrifices, so had they also in this new and mystical Covenant to eat the Flesh of their Lord, which, He had said, is “meat indeed.” But now, doubtless, in eager and adoring watchfulness, their eyes were fixed on all He did, and their ears open to all He said; He had already taught them to expect something gracious at this Supper, for which He said He most earnestly desired; and they were now well accustomed to find that His actions were great miracles and His words contained vast mysteries. Great, therefore, must have been their anxiety, and deep their attention, when with solemn and adorable action “He took Bread;” and the whole action could not but have reminded them of those two great miracles, in which He had done the same; and of that

awful comment on one of them afterwards at Capernaum, in which He said His own body was the true Bread alone to be desired. Every particular is recorded ; and St. Paul also, who had himself received the account, not from man, but by Revelation from God, on this one point alone comes in to add his testimony to that of Evangelists ; St. Luke, his disciple, keeps closely to his statement ; and when they come to the awful words themselves, then they all join in with one accord to give our Lord's exact expressions, "This is My Body."

"*Jesus, in the night in which He was betrayed,*" says St. Paul ; "*and while they were eating,*" say St. Matthew and St. Mark ; "*Jesus*" (Matt., Mark), "*took bread*" (Matt., Mark, Luke, Paul), "*and blessed it*" (Matt., Mark), or "*gave thanks*" (Luke, Paul), "*and brake*" (Matt., Mark, Luke, Paul), "*and gave*" (Matt., Mark, Luke) "*to them*" (Mark, Luke), "*to His disciples*" (Matt.). "*And said, Take, eat*" (Matt., Mark, Paul), "*This is My Body*" (Matt., Mark, Luke, Paul), "*which is given*" (Luke) or "*broken*" (Paul) "*for you. Do this for a memorial of Me*" (Luke, Paul). "For a memorial," i. e. not a typical or prefigurative rite, but commemorative, as St. Paul himself explains it, "for as often as ye eat this Bread and drink this Cup ye do show forth," represent, or exhibit, "the Lord's death till He come."

"He took Bread," it is distinctly recorded ; as He took a human Body, and blessed it by an union with His own Divine nature ; and "He brake it," to set forth the breaking of His own human Body, that He, in the breaking of the same, might show thereby the Power of His own Divinity which He had united with it : and He broke the Bread Himself, to indicate that His death was by His own free will. By eating of this, His Body, our own bodies

also derive the power of Resurrection ; for this Bread, as the inherent life of His own Body, He hath communicated unto us, saying, "Take, eat." But with regard to the words "This is My Body," we must adore in silence, knowing not their full import, but that our Lord said of these His words, "The flesh profiteth nothing ; the words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life ¹:" and that the great type of this Bread was called manna, "What is it?" teaching us thereby, that we must not attempt to know, for it is manna, a name of mystery, "the hidden manna." "And when the children of Israel saw it, they said, it is manna, for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat ²."

Our Lord hath so ordained it that the four sacred writers, like the four pillars which supported the veil that hid the Holy of Holies ³—four, the perfect number—declare with one voice the words, "This is My Body;" and the fifth, His beloved disciple, explains the deep mystical import. Yet after they with one according voice declare, "This is My Body," there is immediately a variation: one says, "which is given;" another, "which is broken:" but why is this? for of the Paschal Lamb it is expressly said, that "a bone shall not be broken." Why is this varied expression, but to indicate that it is His Body, and it is also Bread? His Body is not broken, but "given for us;" the Bread is not given for us, but is "broken." And so was it ordained that all sacrifices from the beginning of the world should intimate this; for they were twofold: first, the flesh of slain beasts and the fruits of the earth; and then in the Law this was always carefully maintained, for the Sacrifices were not only of flesh,

¹ John vi. 63.

² Exod. xvi. 15.

³ Exod. xxvi. 32.

but also "meat offerings of flour." The sacrifice, too, of every lamb had a meat and a drink offering to attend it. And it is much worthy of notice, that in the Divine discourse at Capernaum our Lord throughout continually varies the expression from that of His Flesh, and His Body, to the mention of Bread : as, "I am that Bread of Life;" "I am the living Bread;" "My Flesh is meat indeed;" "Whoso eateth my Flesh." What can we say but as is recorded of the Israelites?—"What is it?" We know not what it is, but that it is Manna, Bread from Heaven. It is a mystery; by calling it a mystery or a hidden thing God Himself forbids us to pry into it, lest we be overwhelmed with His presence. To attempt to search into it is to build a tower of Babel to reach to Heaven, and the result is confusion of tongues, division, and scatterings abroad. With this Bread our Lord has joined His own Body; "What, therefore, God hath joined together let not man put asunder." It is His Body, which cannot see corruption, filled with His quickening Spirit, Which supports Divine life, so that neither body nor soul can perish, although they sleep. As God, in the formation of man, hath combined body and soul, the separation of which is temporal death; so in the Scriptures He has combined the letter with the spirit, so that the letter is true, and true also is the deep spiritual meaning beyond: and so in the Sacraments He has combined water with the Spirit, and His Body and Blood with bread and wine: to separate these is heresy; to hold both together is the Catholic faith. By holding rightly that which is earthly, we come to know also that which is Heavenly; as from our Lord's Human nature we come to learn something of His Divine. To take one and hold it apart from the other, is that which is done by every shape of error; but the Church holds

both in blessed union, and this is Divine life in the Church, as the union of body and soul is the animal life of the natural man. As St. Chrysostom says of the Sacraments, "Nothing merely sensible hath Christ delivered unto us, but hath conveyed what is spiritual in things sensible. If thou hadst been without a body, bodiless gifts would have been bestowed on thee. But since the soul is combined with the body, in things sensible He bestoweth spiritual gifts ⁴."

Here is the true Passover, more ancient than that of the Jews, for Melchisedek was before Aaron: and here is the true Melchisedek, the Prince of Peace, the Priest of the most High God, blessing and bringing forth Bread and Wine for the true children of Abraham. Here is the true Joseph, who was dead and is alive, feasting with his brethren. Here is that Lion of the tribe of Judah, out of whose dead body came forth sweetness. Here is true manna in the wilderness, the word of God, of which whosoever eateth shall never die. Here is that Shew-bread set before the Lord, and "taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant," of which none may partake but they who are pure in heart, and of the "royal Priesthood." Here is that cake given to Elijah in the wilderness, on the strength of which he went forty days and forty nights unto Horeb, the Mount of God. These are those barley loaves which Elisha multiplied to support an hundred men. Here is that cake of barley-bread in the dream which Gideon heard of the Midianite, which fell on the camp of Midian, and destroyed the tent of the enemy. Here is the fulfilment of that blessing which his father gave to Israel, saying, "With corn and wine have I sustained him." Here is that peaceable kingdom of the

⁴ Hom. in Matt. lxxxiii. 4.

Messiah, of which the Prophet Zechariah spake when he said, "Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids." Here is that which is written, He shall "satisfy the poor with bread," "the poor shall eat and be satisfied." Here is that bread which God "bringeth from the earth to strengthen man's heart," and "wine that maketh glad the heart of man." Here is that which is written, "He gave them food from Heaven, and man did eat Angels' food." Nor is the bread and wine alone present, but the holy oil also, the Spirit of God: "Thou hast prepared a table before me against them that trouble me; Thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full." Now we know, O adorable Master, the meaning of Thy words, that we should pray for "daily bread;" and that when we speak of bread, we desire not bread alone, nor think of "the meat that perisheth." Now we know the meaning of Thy words, that Thy "Flesh is meat indeed," and Thy "Blood is drink indeed." Now we see and behold in very deed the threefold fulfilment of that miracle, when the Bread was multiplied in Thy Apostles' hands to feed so many thousands in the wilderness. Now we understand the meaning of that "fatted calf" with which the father welcomed home the prodigal son; having clothed him with the robe of righteousness, and put on his finger the ring and pledge of the covenant, and clad his feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.

Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new. This is "the Table of the Lord," where the Shew-bread is. This is "the Altar of the Lord," where the Sacrifice is. And who are they around the Table but "the household of God," "the Holy Priesthood," they "who have made a covenant with Me with sacrifice?" When the glory of Christ was revealed to the Prophet

Isaiah, he could not proclaim it till the coal from the altar had touched his lips: nor can these, the Apostles, till the Holy Ghost hath hallowed their lips. Here is fulfilled what was spoken of old, "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars . . . she hath mingled her wine, she hath furnished her table . . . she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled⁵." This is true bread without leaven, a Child of Adam without malice. This is the true Paschal Lamb, the only one yet found without spot or blemish. This is that of which the Prophet Malachi spoke, "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place shall be offered unto My name a pure offering⁶." This is that which was foretold by Isaiah, "In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined⁷." This is that of which the Psalmist spake, "Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High," for it is the Thanksgiving, the Eucharistic sacrifice; this is that of which the Psalmist spake, "The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise;" for it is a broken and contrite spirit that hideth in Christ's wounds, drinketh of His Blood, is joined on to His Sacrifice.

This is, by the voice of them of old, declared to be "the awful and unbloody Sacrifice." This, says St. Ignatius, is, "The medicine of immortality, the antidote against death; and life in Jesus Christ for ever⁸." This

⁵ Prov. ix. 1—4.

⁶ Mal. i. 11.

⁷ Isa. xxv. 6.

⁸ Epist. ad Ephes.

is what Justin Martyr calls that "Eucharistical nourishment, by which after the change our flesh is nourished, and we are taught that we are made the Flesh and the Blood of the Incarnate Jesus." By the declaration of the Lord," says St. Hilary, "and by our faith it is truly Flesh and truly Blood; and the receiving of these and drinking of these cause that we should be in Christ and Christ in us⁹." "This is the verity," says St. Jerome (in distinction from the Bread and Wine of Melchisedek, and the Paschal rite); "This is the reality," says Theophylact, "of His Body and of His Blood." Of this speaks Irenæus as "the sacrifices in the Church," "the pure sacrifice offered in every place;" St. Augustin, as "the mystery of peace and unity," "the Eucharistic sacrifice." "This is the Divine and true Passover," says Isidorus Peleusiota. "This," says St. Cyril, "is the spiritual sacrifice," the "sacrifice of propitiation," "the Bread of Heaven and the Cup of Salvation, sanctifying soul and body." "Trust not," he says, "the decision to thy bodily palate, but to faith unfaltering; for when we taste we are bidden to taste not bread and wine, but the antitype of the Body and Blood of Christ¹." "This Passover," says Nazianzen, "is still typical, but a type more plain than the old; the legal Passover, I am bold to say, was but an obscurer type of this type." "On the same table," says St. Chrysostom, "is the typical and the true Passover." This is "the spiritual Passover." "Let us obey God," says he, in another place, "and contradict not, although what He says be opposed to our understanding and sight: over our sight and understanding let His word prevail. In the mysteries let us not look only on what lays before us, but adhere to His words.

⁹ Lib. viii. de Trin.

¹ Cyril, Lect. xxiii. 20.

For His word cannot deceive us ; but our sense is easily deceived. Since, therefore, His word declares 'this' is 'My Body,' let us obey, and believe, and look upon it with spiritual eyes." And again, "That which Angels tremble to behold, nor dare to look on, on account of the brightness thence emanating, with This we are nourished, with This we are mingled, and become the one Body and Flesh of Christ²." "That Bread," says Origen, "which God the Word professes to be His Body, is the Word that nourisheth souls, the word proceeding from God the Word, and bread of Heavenly Bread, laid upon that Table, of which it is written, 'Thou hast prepared a table before me, against them that trouble me.'" "This meat and drink," says St. Ambrose, "is the communication of celestial grace and life³." And the author *De Cœnâ Domini*, "This the true and sincere meat, through type and Sacrament, sanctifieth by touch, enlighteneth by faith, by verity conformeth unto Christ. As the common bread which we eat daily is the life of the body, so that substantial Bread is life of the soul and health of the mind."

This moreover is doubtless that which the Law, being but a shadow of good things to come, spake of as "a memorial to all generations," "a feast by an ordinance for ever," "an everlasting Covenant," "an everlasting possession;" and hence in some sense the need of "an everlasting Priesthood." His word, "Increase and multiply, and replenish the earth," says St. Chrysostom, "hath power in nature through all time to fulfil what it declared ; and in like manner in the Church His words of Consecration give confirmation unto that Sacrifice. For it is not man who makes the offerings to be the Body and

² Hom. in Matt. lxxxiii. 5.

³ Expos. in Luc.

Blood of Christ, but He Himself Who prepares and consecrates His table." Ancient writers dwell on this as our daily food, daily needed, daily prayed for, and in some Churches partaken of daily. This is the Bread, observes St. Cyril, for which we pray in the Lord's Prayer, "holy supersubstantial Bread appointed for the substance of the soul." "Our daily Bread," St. Austin calls it. "This is that Bread," says St. Cyprian, "for which we pray that it may be given to us day by day, lest we who are in Christ, and who daily receive the Eucharist for food of Salvation, be separated from the Body of Christ⁴." And Tertullian, "Because in the Bread is understood His Body,—'This is My Body.' Wherefore, in praying for *daily bread* we pray to be perpetually in Christ, and undivided from His Body⁵." And St. Basil in his Epistles⁶, recommending daily Communion, says, "Since He hath Himself plainly declared, 'He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath eternal life,' who doth doubt but that to partake frequently of life is nothing else than to live much?" And the author De Sacramentis, "If it be the daily Eucharistic Bread, receive daily that which may daily profit thee. So live that thou mayest be daily fit to receive. In like manner as holy Job for his sons offered daily a sacrifice, lest perchance they had sinned in heart or word."

In fine, what shall we say but that this is the Bread of immortality? For it is given us by Him as His own Body, Whose words are "spirit and life," in Whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," that is, essentially and really, "the fulness of Him Who filleth all in all," for

⁴ Tr. vii. 13.

⁵ De Orat. ix. 6.

⁶ Epist. 28. 9, ad Cæs. Pat.

that only can be essential, and real, and true Bread, which nourisheth unto true and enduring life. And it must needs be His Body : for, as St. Paul says, since “we are all partakers of that one Bread,” therefore, “we being many are one Bread and one Body ;” for in partaking of that Cup and of that Bread we partake of His Blood and His Body. It must needs then be immortality to that Church which partakes of These ; and to that member that partakes of These ; for the Father hath “given to the Son to have life in Himself,” and “the Bread of God is He which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth life unto the world.”

SECTION IX

CHRIST CONSOLING HIS DISCIPLES

THE words and manner of our Lord, so full of His approaching sufferings,—the bereavement of His disciples, and His declaration that one of them should betray, and another deny Him, had now filled them with sadness. But the Eucharistic table was replete with mysterious consolation, and these His words that accompanied it, like an Eucharistic Sermon, more than human in sympathy, more than angelic in sweetness, most Divine in doctrine. “*Let not your heart be troubled ; ye believe in God ;*” ye are filled with a sense of the holiness, and justice, and power, of God : “*believe also in Me,*” by Whom you may have access to the Father. Be not overwhelmed with the thoughts of that holiness, which He requires of those who are around Him, nor by the trials which await you, and your own frailty, which I

have foretold. "*In My Father's house there are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you.*" There are different orders of Angelic beings in those heavenly places, and I go to prepare a place for you that are redeemed from among mankind: there are the ninety and nine who are left in the fold of God, and I go to carry the lost sheep that I have found. Or it may be, that among the Saints in Heaven there will be different degrees of glory, and the humble need not despair. For although the labourers were each paid alike a penny a day; and they who had improved their talents entered alike into the joy of their Lord: yet it may be, that as "one star differeth from another star in glory," so the mansions of the Saints are of different brightness. The Priest after the order of Melchisedek, of Whom we know not whence He cometh, nor whither He goeth, is now departing within the veil; by His mediation and intercession, as an High Priest for us, He goes to prepare that place which had in Him been ordained from the beginning; that by the completion of His sacrifice He might find access there even for unclean man. For as in one sense His disciples were chosen "before the foundation of the world," and yet were afterwards chosen by our Lord in the flesh; so the Kingdom was in predestination prepared before the foundation of the world; but in act prepared now for us by Christ. And this is implied in our Lord's words, for He says, "there are many mansions," and yet, as if there were not, He adds, "I go to prepare a place."

"*And if I shall go, and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself; that where I am ye may be also.*" In speaking of His second Coming, He speaks in the present and not in the future tense; it is

"I come," not "I will come;" as in the Revelation, "I come quickly;" and this quickness of His Coming is signified in another place by putting even more strongly the present tense, "The hour cometh, and now is." But it may be asked, How does our Lord come again to receive those, to whom He spoke, who would die before the last Day? or, How is it that He will then receive Christians, if they are spoken of as going to Him at their deaths, as St. Paul says, "having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ?" And St. Stephen, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And the dead in the Lord "shall Christ bring with Him." The difficulty is remarkable, as being in perfect correspondence with the mysterious expressions that are always used of Christ's coming; for doubtless they do more fully and entirely refer to the last Day, when soul and body will be re-united to meet the Lord. Yet, in some subordinate sense, they are all fulfilled also at natural death, when, in some very blessed manner, the dead depart to Christ, and are "with Christ," and He comes to receive them, as He promises, unto Himself. And this preparation also is doubtless twofold; the preparing a place for us, and preparing a place in us for Himself. He goes to prepare a place for us; and yet He stays to prepare in us a place for Himself. As St. Augustin very beautifully observes, "Let the Lord, therefore, go and prepare a place: let Him go that He may not be seen, let Him be concealed that He may be believed on. For then is a place being prepared when we live by faith. Let Him be believed on that He may be desired, let Him be desired that He may be obtained; for the desire of love is the preparing of the mansion. So, Lord, prepare what Thou preparest; for Thou preparest us for Thyself; and Thyself for us: for Thou preparest a place both in us for

Thyself, and in Thyself for us. For Thou hast said, 'Abide in Me, and I in you.' According as each one shall be partaker of Thee, one less, and another more, so will be the diversity of rewards according to the diversity of merits; this will be the many 'mansions,' according to the diversity of those who shall abide in them; but yet all shall live in eternity, and be blessed without end."

"And where I go ye know, and the way ye know," for all His teaching had been of Heaven, and of the way to arrive thither. *"Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?"* For being more slow than the rest in comprehending spiritual and mysterious things, he had been perplexed by our Lord's expressions of His departing to a place where they should come. The mention of this circumstance sets before us, in a manner exceedingly natural, the same difficulty, felt at the time they were spoken, which some of us now feel on hearing of things Heavenly. And our Lord's answer seems to indicate that such persons of plain common sense, but dull in the understanding of what is transcendental and spiritual, do in fact often comprehend more than they are themselves aware of; for Thomas here declares that he knew not whither He went, nor the way, and yet our Lord afterwards says of the Father, "Ye know Him, and have seen Him," in seeing and knowing the Son; and therefore they knew both the end and the way. St. Augustin indeed thinks that these words of their knowing Christ and the Father, were spoken of some of them, but not of all. But may it not be, that these words are used sometimes in a fuller, and sometimes in a subordinate manner? In one sense they knew the Father, and had seen Him, in the words and works of Christ; but in one sense, in regard to the fuller

manifestation of the Divinity, they had not known Him ; for when the Spirit should be given, then would they know Him and the Father, as they had not before.

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life ; no one cometh unto the Father, except it be through Me.” No one can come unto Christ unless the Father draw him ; nor can any one know Christ unless the Father reveal Him : and here we have the reverse also, that none can come unto the Father but by Christ. How mysteriously intermingled with His words are greatest and highest doctrines ! the calm and equable flow of the words is from the immeasurable depths below, which human thought cannot fathom. He is not merely the Author of the way, the Teacher of the truth, the Giver of life, but, after some incomprehensible manner, He is Himself the true Way, the very Truth, the true Life. In like manner, He is not only the Giver of light, but is Himself the Light ; not only the Author of the resurrection and of life, but He says, *“I am the Resurrection and the Life.”* So also *“the Kingdom”* is His, after some transcendental and true sense, of which all other kingdoms are but shadows. He is *“the good Shepherd ;”* *“the true Vine ;”* for these things which we behold are but resemblances of the great realities which are in Him. *“This is the way,”* says Origen, *“on which one need take nothing for the journey, neither scrip, nor garment, nor staff, nor have our feet clad with sandals, for He who is Himself the Way is abundantly sufficient of Himself to supply all that is needful ; he who travels on this road will find that he needs nothing, being adorned with the wedding garment, with which he must be clothed who is going to the Marriage feast ; nor shall any evil meet with him on this Way.”* And in another place, *“This*

is the good way, that leadeth the 'good man,' and 'the good and faithful servant,' unto the good Father. This is the narrow way, which cannot contain the many, nor carnal men. Where he that travelleth needeth not sandals, for the ground on which he standeth is holy; he needeth not a staff, for he shall meet with no enemies therein. It leadeth unto Him who hath said, 'I am the Life.' For to him that hath not yet attained unto the end, but is advancing onward, He is the Way; but to him that hath cast aside all deadness, 'He is the Life.'"

"*If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also,*" for the Word is "the brightness of His Glory, the express Image of His Person." "*And henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him.*" Philip, though not so slow as St. Thomas in the perception of things spiritual, but yet not so advanced as some of the others, and ever simple in faith and transparent in character—"Philip saith unto Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Am I so long with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He who hath seen Me hath seen the Father: and how sayest thou, Show us the Father?" For Christ is of one Substance with the Father. "The Lord reproves Philip," says St. Austin, "because He had been so long with them, and yet was not known." And St. Chrysostom says, "He speaks with a strong reproof to Philip, saying, 'Am I so long with you? hast thou enjoyed such teaching, seen signs with inherent power, and all things which were the properties of Godhead alone, such as the Father alone worketh, sins remitted, mysteries brought forward, death retiring, the power of the Creator upon earth, and yet hast thou not known Me?'"

"*Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the*

Father in Me? The words which I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself, but the Father who dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works." "Therefore it is evident," says St. Augustin, "that words are works." And so also the reverse, that works are words. For he that by speech edifies his neighbour, does a good work; and good works are of themselves the most powerful language. The same may be said in a higher sense of our Lord's words and works; for His miracles spoke a language and preached His Gospel; and His actions taught as well as His words: and on the other hand His parables were equivalent to miracles, from the prophecies, the knowledge, and the mysteries contained therein. And both of them are attributed by Christ to His union with the Father; for of His works He says, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." And of His words, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me." But in a still higher sense the words of God are works, for His Word is the Creator of all things. "*Believe Me,*" speaking now in the plural number to all the disciples, as He had addressed Philip in the preceding verse, "*Believe ye Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; but if not, believe Me for the very works' sake.*" The expression is very similar to what our Lord used to the Jews: "If ye believe not Me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him." To believe in Christ as manifesting the Father, without reference to His works, is the highest degree of faith; and the next is to believe Him on account of His works: the good heart believes without evidence; and acceptable also is that which believes with evidence; but the less

evidence is required, the higher is the faith evinced. So efficacious is this belief in Christ in either degree, that it connects and unites with Him, and derives of His Power, partakes, as it were, even of His Divinity. "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth in Me, the works that I do shall he do also,*" for Christ will be in him, and Christ will do his works. "*And greater things than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father.*" For when the Son of Man is elevated to the right hand of God, and the Spirit is given, and death is overcome, and the ransom is paid; then will Christ be more powerful in His members, and work greater things through them than He did Himself in the flesh; for belief in Him will be greater, and this is the only limit to the exercise of His Almighty power on earth. These greater works were in some degree shown through the Apostles; some of their miracles were greater, as "the shadow of Peter passing by" wrought a greater miracle than that which took place by touching the hem of Christ's garment. And if the miracles were not in themselves so abundant and great, yet to produce greater effects with no miracles, or with less, is a greater proof of power. The number who believed were far greater, and the sacrifices they made, through faith, were greater; for the rich young man whom our Lord loved would not give up his riches; but afterwards, many sold their possessions. As St. Augustin says, "Doth not he do greater works who worketh out his own salvation with fear and trembling, which in him, but not without him, Christ worketh? I should say that this work was certainly greater than heaven and earth, and whatever things are beheld in heaven and earth, which shall pass away." St. Chrysostom also observes, that although miracles in his time had ceased,

yet the conversion of the heart and life which faith evinced, was a greater miracle than any over the powers of nature.

“And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, this will I do ; that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” Here, again, He speaks of His own independent power and Person ; but again adds His close union with the Father : *“If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it.”* Perhaps these promises to prayer, boundless as they are, require no explanation or limit ; but, of course, the Scriptures imply common sense and judgment in the application of them ; for if petitions were granted which were not for our good, prayer would, in fact, not be answered in the better and higher sense. But it may be in some mysterious way that prayer always is answered ; even unworthy prayers, but not to our good ; or imperfect prayers to our imperfect edification. *“All these things are,”* as Chrysostom says, *“spoken to their comfort, for as they could not be otherwise than depressed, in not being capable of understanding respecting our Lord’s Resurrection, He speaks to them every expression of consolation, and assures them of His continuance in existence, and not only that, but of showing in and by them greater manifestations of His existence and power.”*

“If ye love Me, keep My commandments ; and I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever.” Throughout these discourses our Lord continually stops to lay stress on the necessity of keeping the commandments, as the only test of love. And it is also very wonderful how the highest points of doctrine respecting the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are interwoven throughout ; so as to render them, humanly speaking, replete with difficulties and

contradictions, for which no key is furnished but by the Catholic Faith ; discordances together moulded into a Divine harmony, which nothing less than eternity can unravel. Our Lord will ask the Father, and He will give the Comforter ; but not so, our Lord Himself will “send Him.” And He is “another Comforter,” for our Lord Himself is called by the same name of “Comforter¹ :” and yet He is not another, but it is He Himself that is to come ; and again, He will not send Him, but He Himself will come. All these things to us are not contradictions, but Christian verities ; humanly speaking, they are such things as cannot be ; but Divinely speaking, such as cannot be otherwise. And again, as St. Augustin asks, “How are we to love Him in order to receive Him, for if we have Him not we cannot love Him ? and how can we keep the commandments in order to receive Him, for if we have Him not we cannot keep the commandments ? Love,” he says, “goes before in us, by which we love Christ, so that by loving Christ, and keeping His commandments, we are rendered worthy to receive the Holy Spirit.” And so it is, for he who loves has the Holy Spirit, and by having Him becomes worthy to have Him more, and by having Him more he loves more.

“Even the Spirit of Truth, Whom the world cannot receive ; for it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him ; but ye know Him, for He abideth with you, and shall be in you.” “For worldly love,” saith St. Augustin, “hath not invisible eyes, by which the Spirit is beheld invisibly, and not otherwise.” And if the Spirit cannot be discerned by the world, so far as we partake of the world, of worldly opinions, worldly tempers, worldly modes of life, we cannot behold Him, nor will He be manifested to us. “Observe,”

¹ 1 John ii. 1. There translated, “Advocate.”

says St. Chrysostom, "with what expressions He exalts the mention of Him. He said, He is another even as I ; He said, He will not leave you ; He said, He comes unto you only, even as I have done ; He said, He abideth in you ; but not even thus did He dissipate their sorrow." They still sought for Him, and their accustomed converse with Him ; therefore, He adds, "*I will not leave you orphans ;*" for He had at the beginning spoken to them under the affectionate name of "Little children." "*I will come unto you.*" And yet, that they might not understand it as a Bodily Presence, as it now was with them, He adds, "*Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more ; but ye see Me ; because I live, ye shall live also.*"

Yet a little while and He should have risen from the dead, but the world should not behold Him, nor have Him manifested to them ; He should be seen only by certain "witnesses chosen of God ;" for after the Resurrection He only showed Himself to His friends, and in His Resurrection they should have life ; He speaks of Himself in the present tense, for Life is ever in Him ; but of them in the future, as of life yet to be. And as after the Resurrection they alone would see Him with bodily eyes, so also after the Ascension they only would see Him with spiritual eyes ; and so beholding Him, and loving Him, though unseen, they would have life in His Life : first of all, in being risen with Him in Baptism, at a New Birth and to a second life ; and finally, being risen with Him in the great Resurrection. And again in the higher sense, "yet a little while" and the world shall have no more power of discerning the Son of God, for His Kingdom of Grace will be at an end. "Little children, it is the last time ;" "yet a little while," and they that love Him shall see Him as He is, and shall for ever have life in Him.

“In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.” This is doubtless that which the Prophet had spoken of, and which St. Paul said was fulfilled in them, that “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him ; but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.” And we know that throughout the Holy Scriptures, what is said of Christ’s union with and relation to the Father is said also, after another and very different and inferior sense, of our union with and relation to Him. We are called in Him the Sons of God ; the image of God ; as sitting together with Him in Heavenly places. And St. Paul says, “Ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s ;” and our Lord Himself, “As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.” For only as being one with Christ is our nature received into Heaven, and set on the right hand of God. Such things will be revealed unto them by the Spirit in this present life ; but only by anticipation and in hope of that fulness with which they will be revealed hereafter. But what is this love here below that shall produce such mysterious union ? *“He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me. And he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.”* “It is love,” says Augustin, “which maketh men to be of one mind in an house ; in which house the Father and the Son make Their abode ; Who give also that love itself to those on whom They will in the end bestow that manifestation of Themselves. He asked of the manifestation of Christ, and heard of love and abiding. There is, therefore, a certain internal manifestation of God, which the wicked cannot know.”

“Judas saith unto Him (not Iscariot), Lord, how is it

that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" Our Lord's instruction in the Temple was brought out by the tempting questions of His enemies ; so now are the friendly inquiries of His disciples all ordered for our edification. It is not evident whether St. Jude asks in his simplicity, as St. Chrysostom says, "being terrified and troubled, as if it were like seeing the dead," or whether there was some deeper thought in his words. His Epistle shows him to be one thoughtful and very earnest in preserving the Faith, and eager to snatch the wicked from that other manifestation of Christ which will be in judgment.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, If any man love Me, he will keep My word ; and My Father will love him ; and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He who loveth Me not, keepeth not My sayings ; and the Word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's Who hath sent Me." He speaketh of His sayings in the plural, St. Austin observes, but in the singular of His Father's Word ; for He is Himself the Word that proceedeth from the Father. This strict union between the Father and the Son is ever spoken of in a manner to move our affections ; for such mysterious doctrine is not to us like some speculative matter, but of concern most intimate. And having spoken of the indwelling of the Father and the Son, He proceeds to speak of the indwelling of the Spirit. And how great must be the Redemption of man, and the renewing in him of God's image, when it is not only in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit, that he is baptized ; but They, after some real but mysterious sense, come to make their abode in him ! And the word "abiding" must also be understood, after a great and Divine manner, as signifying continuance in the strongest

sense ; that our Lord's coming would not be like a vision to vanish away ; nor like imaginations or feelings of the mind which come and go, "as a guest that tarrieth but a day ;" nor like our Lord's continuance with them in the flesh, but an abode enduring and eternal.

"These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you." Here again His words must have been mysterious and difficult to His disciples ; for His abiding was of two kinds ; the one when He "went in and out among them," and they beheld Him with bodily eyes ; the other spiritual, and not depending on bodily senses, which are perishable. In this His spiritual Presence, is the fulfilment not only of the desires of the enlightened soul, but also of the blind and instinctive yearnings of our nature. All heathen writers had glimpses or dreams of something internal, that is enduring. In Aristotle it is that wisdom or knowledge of things Heavenly, which will be disclosed to him who is made perfect in the moral virtues. In Cicero it is that learning which depends not on external contingencies, of shipwreck, or fires, or change of place, or spoiling of goods. In Lucretius it is a pure and calm philosophy, which looks unmoved on the changes of the world. They all express the deep want of our nature, which nothing earthly could satisfy ; and a hope not extinguished, though blind and dark.

"But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My Name, He will teach you all things, and will bring all things to your remembrance which I have told you." Nothing is disunited in this most adorable and inconceivable Union ; blessed are they for ever, if it is the Comforter, Who is to teach them ; yet it is not of Himself, as One to whom we can look separately ; but it is from His being sent by the Father. Nor is there any thing

without Christ, for it is in His Name. Nor is even His teaching separate or distinct, but His very teaching is in bringing to remembrance what Christ had said. O most mysterious and deep diversity! O most wonderful and incomprehensible unity! Hence it is that charity below is all in all, uniting the members of Christ to each other, and to Christ, after some faint resemblance of that mysterious union. As what He had been saying had been in great measure difficult of comprehension, He promises them another Teacher, Who should explain these things, and remind them of His teaching. And He especially calls the Holy Spirit the Comforter, it may be on account of their present sorrow, and the afflictions they were to meet with; for it is in afflictions especially that He is revealed as the Comforter. In some circumstances He is the Faithful Witness; in others He is the Spirit of Truth; in others He is the Holy Ghost; in others He is the Comforter. Nor is it fresh knowledge only which we learn of the Spirit of God, His is the memory of what we do know. His, the presence of mind which brings before us His precepts in the hour of need. And, in the Inspired Writers, the Holy Ghost not only revealed, but called to their recollection these things said and done by their Lord. If, therefore, any in explaining the Sacred Writers, would suggest imperfections of memory, they must take heed lest they offend against the Holy Spirit.

"Peace I leave you: My peace I give you. Not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Not as the world uses these words of salutation, or valediction; for the words of Christ are not empty words, but powerful to bestow that which they declare. Not like the peace of the world, without real love, a false peace; but the peace of Christ is

that wherewith we are at peace with others, at peace with ourselves, and at peace with God; for, as St. Paul says, "He is our Peace." This is that peace which is declared by Christ's ministers, for "where two or three are gathered together" in His Name, as now they were, it is He in the midst of them, giving His peace: and "if the son of peace be there," He is coming to him as He promised, when He authorized His disciples to pronounce "peace."

"Ye have heard that I said unto you, I go, and come unto you." Ye know, as I have told you, that My departure is not for ever; grieve not for Me when ye find that I am dead; but still have hope, I shall soon arise. And even then, when I depart from your bodily eyes, remember My promise, that spiritually I will be with you, in that new Name of consolations, the Comforter; and after a little while, as I said unto you, ye shall see Me again, that ye may be also where I am. *"If ye loved Me, ye would have rejoiced, because I said, I go unto the Father: for My Father is greater than I."* I am with you in a state of humiliation and affliction, but I have a greatness which is hid with God; and to depart and be with Him is a matter of rejoicing. But here there occurs again another difficulty in the words, "for My Father is greater than I." "Our Lord," observes St. Austin, "being Himself the Son of God, equal to the Father, in the form of God, emptied Himself, not losing the form of God, but taking the form of a servant. He is greater than Himself also because the form of God, which is not lost, is greater than that of a servant, which is taken. Speaking according to this form of a servant, the Son of God saith, 'The Father is greater than I.' And speaking according to the form of God, the same Son of God says, 'I and the Father are One.' He is One, as He is God the Word; and the Father is greater,

as He is the Word made Flesh. According to this form of a servant, Christ, as a child, was inferior to His parents; for it is written, He was subject unto them, as a little one to his elders.

“And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it shall have come to pass, ye may believe.” These words of our Lord perhaps He spoke of all prophecy, that it is intended not so much to inform beforehand, as to strengthen faith in God’s controlling providence after the fulfilment. It may be that no fulfilment already discerned is so much the end of prophecy, as to produce a state of mind which waits for and looks out for God, in future and fuller developments of the same. Nor perhaps are prophecies ever to be understood before their fulfilment, by mere inquiry: for “who can by searching find out God?” but a mind conformed to God is in a frame to receive and understand the first tokens of their development; for “God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit,” Which “dwelleth with the contrite.” And “to the meek are mysteries revealed.”

“Hereafter I will not talk much with you,” for the time of My last and great trial is now at hand; *“for the prince of this world cometh,”*—he that as yet has had sway in a world at enmity with God, and found no one full proof against his assaults; but think not from these words, that it is a trial in which I am to fall; far otherwise: he cometh *“and hath nothing in Me.”* For in Christ was there no sin of the will, neither was there sin by nature, for He was born of a pure Virgin. Neither, therefore, was He subject to that curse of death, which was passed on all mankind, that Satan should have the power of death over Him. But His death was a voluntary surrender of Himself, from obedience unto the Father

even unto death, that all the universe might witness this His perfect obedience. As He adds, "*But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath commanded Me, thus I do.*" For as it was written of Him, "I paid them the things that I never took," so He paid them the penalty of death, which He had not incurred. And as our Lord had before said to Judas, "What thou doest, do quickly," showing His readiness to die, so does He now on speaking of His death, and the time being fully come, arise and hasten to the voluntary fulfilment, saying, "*Arise, let us depart hence.*"

We may suppose it was at this time, "after supper," that our Lord took the Cup of Benediction. For there is evidently a pause here in the sacred narrative, which allows of its insertion; and whatever else may here intervene, it is now at a time when He had been speaking of His death; and of the indwelling of Himself and His Spirit in His members; and when He afterwards proceeds to speak of the Vine. And if we thus connect it, the words, "arise, let us go hence," will not be unsuitable to this new Passover, the substance and antitype of that, which was "eaten in haste," with their "loins girded," and their "staff in their hand;" for we also who eat of this New Passover are to be with our loins girded, and staff in our hands, and like unto them who wait for their Lord. This will render the whole of these discourses in St. John to be more strongly and evidently Eucharistic. And thus we break into their hallowed and more than Heavenly tone, with nothing else from the other Evangelists but the appointment of the Bread and Wine; while they, as the holy oil and the sweet spices that attended the sacrifice, arise as propitiatory to God; and with pure and hallowing fragrance fill the Church below.

SECTION X

THE CUP OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

OF the appointment of the Bread it is said, that it took place "as they were eating," or "when they had eaten;" the expression may perhaps merely signify, while they were at the table. What pause may have ensued between that and the Wine does not appear. It is, however, clear that the Supper was now ended, for it is said, "*Likewise after Supper*" (Luke, Paul). "Likewise;" for if these two were not connected together by the time of their appointment, yet there was something, either in the marked and emphatic manner of our Lord, or some other circumstance, that distinguished these two actions beyond all the important transactions of that memorable evening; drawing them out and putting them forth together, as the two cardinal ordinances, of which the old dispensation spoke in type and figure, and the new was to realize by the existence of the Church in all spiritual graces; in which these were to be as Life and Light unto the end, "for a memorial before the Lord continually" "unto all generations." For the house in which Wisdom hath "mingled her wine and furnished her table," she hath built "on seven pillars,"—on pillars of sevenfold, of infinite strength, as the pillars of Heaven. Likewise after Supper "*He took*" (Matt., Mark) "*the Cup*" (Matt., Mark, Luke, Paul). "In the hand of the Lord there is a Cup, and the wine is red; it is full mixed." But that cup of which the Psalmist spake was

"the cup of wrath," "the cup of trembling;" and such was the cup which our Blessed Lord now took to Himself, and had to drink this night; to "suck out" even to the bitter dregs—the portion of the ungodly; but which cup of His own sorrows He gives to us, His enemies, to be rendered to us by His giving the cup of benediction, "wine that maketh glad the heart of man." It is not a Cup, as before, but "the Cup," as all the four narratives record; and when He gave it to them, it was with the words, not a Cup, but "the Cup;" it may be, as is said by some, "the Cup" of grace and blessing usual at the termination of the Paschal Feast, thus hallowed and converted into the new Cup, the Cup of immortality; in whose circumference is no termination, and whose depth within no one can exhaust nor fathom; from whence, as from a fountain, flow all the graces and blessings of the kingdom. "He took the Cup;" as all the parts of this commemorative Rite were probably afterwards taught the Church, either by Himself when He spoke to them of the things concerning the Kingdom, or by His Spirit, and by the unity of the Apostles; so now deeply significative was this action of the Son of God. Here was all that simplicity, combined with awful majesty, with which God works His greatest works, and speaks of the greatest realities. For to Him Who is infinite nothing is great, and to Him Who is Almighty there is no effort. Whatever the action was, whether it was accompanied on this, as on other occasions, with that expressive gesture of "lifting up His eyes to Heaven;" we know that there was at all such times a remarkable act of Thanksgiving. For the miracle of the loaves is characterized by this action more than by any thing else; it is described by St. John as their eating bread

“when the Lord had given thanks.” He took the Cup, “*and when He had given thanks*” (Matt., Mark). He gave thanks, showing His willingness to die: He gave thanks, under extreme sufferings, and wrongs, and injuries, that we through Him might do so likewise: He gave thanks, that we in and through Him might be thankful, “giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ:” He gave thanks, because although to Him it was the bitter cup of His sufferings, to us it was the new wine of forgiveness and “the Cup of salvation:” He gave thanks, to teach us that “every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving.” He gave thanks, because it was for this that He had so earnestly desired. And when He had so done, offering it first as an oblation unto God, “*He gave it unto them*” (Matt., Mark). Then did He give into their hands for His Church the greatest gift that He ever consigned unto the world, and with the same extreme simplicity with which in the beginning He created all things, by His word alone; imparting to them the laws and privileges which they were to observe unto the end. As at first He said, “to you it shall be for meat;” and as at last He shall say, “inherit the Kingdom prepared for you;” conveying thereby fulness of bliss and immortality; so now “He gave it unto them.”

And, doubtless, full of significancy and importance are the words which St. Matthew and St. Mark now add; St. Mark recording the fact, “*And they all drank of it;*” and St. Matthew still more strongly, that it was accompanied with a command that they should do so, saying, “*Drink ye all of it.*” Strange that such a command should be needful, that any individual or any Church

should cut off itself from a privilege so exceeding great, casting aside thereby the arm of the Great Comforter ! But when He thus spake, doubtless "He knew what was in man, and needed not that any should testify of what was," or what would be, "in man." For as He had said, "Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you ;" so also to His Church hath He said, "Drink ye all of it," and "they all drank of it ;" for else they have no part with Him. It is not enough that we eat, but we must drink also ; not they who hunger only, but "they who hunger and *thirst* after Righteousness, they shall be filled ;" and what is our Righteousness, but Christ Himself ? They shall be "filled with all the fulness of God : " the "Lord Himself is the portion of my Cup ;" He is Himself the inheritance of His people ; with Him is the well of life. Of this spake the Spirit by the Psalmist, "O God, Thou art my God, my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh also longeth after Thee."

"*And He spake unto them*" (Mark), "*saying*" (Matt.), "*This is My Blood, That of the New Testament, which is shed for many*" (Matt., Mark). But the other two Inspired Writers give the account with a slight variation, either as explanatory, or as using other words which were also spoken at the same time : "*This, the Cup, is the New Testament in My Blood*" (Luke, Paul), "*which is shed for you*" (Luke). The expression "for many," in the two former Evangelists, might intimate either the whole world, or all those for whom it is effectually shed, and to whom it is savingly given, the Church of the Elect ; the "many" who are "called" to the marriage supper of the Lamb, or the "many" who "shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of

Heaven." And St. Luke may wish to explain it in this latter sense, by the term shed "for you;" i.e. for you, the Apostles, who represent the Church of God; and thus both the terms together serve to express that which neither of them would of itself; as if it was said, It is not for you only, the Apostles or ministers of the Church, but "for many," or the whole Body; and again, it is not for "the many," who go the broad way of death, but for you, My chosen: the Blood, in some sense, shed for the whole world, but in another sense, for those only who are saved thereby.

To this general account St. Matthew alone adds, "*For the remission of sins:*" for the Law, of which St. Matthew was more especially the interpreter, had always pointed out that remission of sins which it was unable to afford, teaching that by means of blood was remission, but leaving the more heinous sins unremitted by any legal sacrifice; indicating that "it is not possible that the blood of calves and of goats should take away sins."

But again, this is in one sense "the Blood of the New Testament," as in St. Matthew and St. Mark; but in another sense, "this Cup" is itself "the New Testament," as the other two Sacred Writers record it. It is the Blood of the Testament, "for a testament is of no strength without the death of the testator;" the ratification and consignation of the testament is blood. And it is the Blood of the *New Testament* in distinction from the blood of the Old. For the cup of the Old Testament was, as St. Chrysostom says, "the libations and the blood of brute creatures. For so, after sacrificing, they used to receive the blood in a chalice and bowl, and so pour it out." And we read that Moses "sprinkled both the book," i.e. the book of the covenant, "and all the people,

saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you." This, therefore, is the Blood of the Covenant, or of the New Testament. And this Cup is itself also the New Testament; the blood is itself the Covenant, for drinking of this Cup is all in all. Of the blood of old it was expressly and repeatedly enjoined that they were not to drink: "Whatsoever man eateth any manner of blood, I will cut him off from among his people; for I have given the blood to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls. For it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul." And again, "Thou shalt not eat it, thou shalt pour it on the earth. Thou shalt not eat it, that it may go well with thee." But of this blood of the New Covenant it is said, "drink ye all of it:" it is itself the atonement, the New Covenant. He who hath the mark of this Blood on his house shall be passed over by the destroying Angel; he who, as Rahab, holds out this "scarlet thread" shall be spared in the devoted city. In Egypt is this Passover; it is in that Jerusalem on which the curses of Egypt have come; yet forty years, and the destroyer shall have overtaken them, and they who have not the marks of this blood shall be blotted out of the Book of Life. This blood again is "poured forth," as the blood of old, but it must not be poured out upon the ground, which God hath cursed, but must be drunk by those that are redeemed from among men. And again, the blood must be "upon the lintel and the two side-posts of the door," but not on the threshold, lest any should have "trodden under foot the Son of God," and have "counted the Blood of the Covenant an unholy thing."

And to these words St. Paul adds, as he had done to the Bread before, "*Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, for*

a memorial of Me:" not in the destroyed Egypt only; not only in the guilty Jerusalem is this to be the mark of salvation; but unto the end: not only for a memorial of what is past, but prospective also; for there is no need of preserving the memory of what is past, but because it bears onward on what is to be. It is not only showing forth the Lord's death, but it is "till He come,"—with a reference to His coming.

Moreover, as there can be no testament without blood, and as there is no covenant without blood, therefore, so long as the Covenant endures there must be the Blood; not for that generation only, but for all who enter into that Covenant, for Moses "sprinkled all the people;" and this has always been marked out as the "everlasting Covenant;" therefore this Blood must be ever and again renewed in memorial; not once only, but "as often as ye drink it," it is the Blood of the Lord, the covenant between God and man. Hence it follows that there is need of an unfailing Priesthood to commemorate the same in succession of office, as that of Levi; a succession not by birth, as that of Levi, but by spiritual calling. Again, not in succession, as being after the order of Melchisedek, from setting forth the Priesthood of Christ; and filled with ministerial graces, which come not by succession, but are to them as born of that Spirit, of Which no man knoweth whence He cometh nor whither He goeth: and yet not of Melchisedek, as being not in one but in many. An order, therefore, not of Levi, not of Melchisedek, but yet partaking of both.

But how was that Flesh and Blood virtually and effectually present at this time, when our Lord was alive with them? This, of course, is a great mystery, but only one out of many mysteries: for in like manner afterwards

is His Body and Blood present in the Eucharist, although His Body is in Heaven. Who can explain the other mysteries, as how He was both Priest and Victim also? How even unto this day He is present with us, and yet He is absent from us? how He speaks afterwards of going unto the Father, and yet at that very time He was "the Son of Man which is in Heaven"?

Here, then, was fulfilled what our Lord had said in giving the Cup of the Old Testament in St. Luke, that He should "no longer drink of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God shall come." But this also the antitype is of itself but a type of a still future fulfilment; for to this Cup does He add the same with a more specific designation. "*Verily*" (Mark) "*I say unto you, that hereafter,*" or from henceforth, "*I will not drink of (this,*" Matt.) "*the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you*" (Matt., Mark) "*in the kingdom of My Father*" (Matt.), "*in the kingdom of God*" (Mark). The emphatic words "that day," would seem to indicate the Day of Days, the great Day, or what is sometimes called "the Day," that last Day, when "to him that overcometh" God will give to eat of "the hidden manna." The words "in the kingdom of My Father," perhaps especially imply this, for this expression seems to intimate not the visible Church, as the terms, "the kingdom of Heaven," "the kingdom of Christ," and the "kingdom of God;" but to speak of that time "when He shall have delivered up the kingdom unto the Father." If this be the case, it follows that that time of the end is chiefly here designated; but not alone, for St. Mark says "the kingdom of God." Here, therefore, is the difference between this occasion and the former one, spoken of in St. Luke, that in the former cup our

Lord spoke of old things having passed, and the new kingdom on the point of having arrived ; but in giving this latter Cup He speaks of the kingdom of Heaven, both now and hereafter.

In manifold ways, therefore, are our Lord's words fulfilled ; first of all, when after His Resurrection, during His sojourn upon earth, His Church is described as consisting of them "who did eat and drink with Him, after He rose from the dead ;" now in the Eucharist is it fulfilled unto the end ; and hereafter shall it be again, when "He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." For it seems implied in what has been said, that there is something mysteriously represented unto us under the terms of eating and drinking, a true eating and drinking in some spiritual sense, in the invisible Kingdom of the Father, of which we can form no more conception than we can of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. But the expression abounds throughout the Scripture, with reference to something future, which does not cease. That, therefore, which now supports our natural life is but a type or emblem of the same spiritual fulfilment. And the same is raised and sanctified to mystical import in the eating and drinking of the Old Testament : of the manna in the desert ; of the sacrifices under the Law ; and Divine worship itself is connected with it ; as of Moses and the seventy elders at the Holy Mount, it is said, "They saw God, and did eat and drink ;" the same also is implied in the expression, "Such as be fat upon earth have eaten and worshipped," and "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God." Therefore these things, earthly or legal, are fulfilled in things eternal and spiritual by the Body and Blood of the Lord in the Holy Eucharist ; and

this itself in something still more Divine and mysterious in the Kingdom of God hereafter.

"Therefore," says Origen, "the Saviour will eat and drink that Paschal Bread and Wine, renewed in the Kingdom of God. He will eat and drink of the fruit of the vine, and will drink it new; and, on account of His exceeding goodness and affection to men, will eat and drink together with His disciples, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom unto God and the Father. Observe when He says, I shall drink it new, it is at no other time than in the kingdom of the Father. Therefore," he proceeds, "this Passover will be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And as the Apostle says, 'let no one judge you in meat and drink,' which are 'a shadow of things to come,' such has a reference to future mysteries concerning spiritual eating and drinking, of which the things written concerning eating and drinking in the Law were the shadow. But it is manifest, that the true meat and true drink is that which we shall eat and drink in the kingdom of God, by these things building up and strengthening that most true life." But, of course, by this Origen merely means an inconceivable spiritual fulfilment; for he says, "After a bodily sense, and according to the likeness of our present food and drink, 'the kingdom of God is not meat and drink,' to those who have shown themselves worthy of the Heavenly Bread, the Bread of Angels, that food of which the Saviour speaks, 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.'"

The expression of our Lord, that He Himself would eat and drink with them, has in it not only something of ineffable condescension, but some allusion to the doctrine of the Eucharist; where not only is He Him-

self That of Which we partake, but He must be in us also in order that we may do so, and partake of Him. "When we drink," says Origen, "He departeth not from us, but drinketh it together with us; since He is Himself in each of us; for by ourselves and without Him we cannot either eat of that Bread or drink of that fruit of the True Vine."

It is here expressly called "the New Wine," because it is perfectly new in kind, in that kingdom where all things are made new; the new Heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness; and therefore a new wine, the produce of the new earth and Heavens; and yet it is also of "*this* fruit of the vine," for it is in some sense the same, and they are the same bodies which are to partake of it, though glorified. It is the fruit of the vine, i. e. of the true Vine, which is Christ Himself, and prepared in the wine-press of His Passion. This is the New Wine, which received into old bottles will burst the bottles and destroy them. This is the New Wine which the Heavenly Bridegroom hath kept till now, for the children of the Bride-chamber; for God ever keepeth that which is best to the last. This is that Wine of which the Vine said, "My wine that cheereth God and man." And this Wine our Lord is Himself to drink with His disciples, in token of which He ate and drank with them after His Resurrection, while He taught of His Kingdom. He is Himself to drink of the fruit of that vine, for it was for this that He thirsted from the beginning; for this He prepared a vineyard and planted "the choicest vine," and "looked for grapes;"—thirsting for the fruits, the obedience of His people. Our obedience, though itself unprofitable as water, yet by Him is converted into the New Wine; on obedience was wrought that miracle in Cana of Galilee, for

“His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.” It was for this wine that He thirsted even unto death.

“I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink : I was hungry, and ye gave Me meat :” this, Blessed Lord, is Thine own teaching, because this is the measure of Thine own boundless charities ; we were hungry and we were athirst, yea even nigh unto death ; and Thou hast given us to eat and to drink of Thine own Body and Thine own Blood. Thou hast washed our feet, and hast bidden us to wash the feet of each other. Thou hast called us, “the halt, the blind, and the lame,” unto Thine own Heavenly Table ; and hast bidden us to invite “the halt, the blind, and the lame,” to our own. We were in debt to Thee, and Thou hast forgiven us, that we might forgive one another, even according to the measure of Thine own love to us ; that so we may be known to be Thine by Thy Divine Love dwelling in us.

SECTION XI

THE TRUE VINE

THE mysterious connexion which His Flesh had with Bread, as being the true Bread, and the Bread of life, our Lord had before explained in the Synagogue at Capernaum ; and the discourse which has been here made to follow it, respecting the indwelling of Christ and His Spirit, may well be supposed to arise from the subject of that Bread. And as He was ever connecting Heavenly doctrine with visible objects and passing occasions, the giving of the Cup as His Blood naturally gives rise to this parable. For in

that mysterious Sacrament of unity it had been shown that they were to become one with Him and with each other by partaking of His Body and Blood ; and if His Blood was the New Wine, then did it follow that He Himself was the Vine ; and if they were one with Him, they also must be parts of the Vine.

“ I am the true Vine.” That only is true which abideth for ever ; “ the true tabernacle ” is Heaven itself ; “ the true Bread ” is that of which “ he that eateth shall never hunger,” and that which gives true life ;—“ the true light ” is that which wanes not ;—“ the true riches ” are those which cannot be lost ; for all material things, being shadowy and perishable, are not real or true. *“ And My Father is the Husbandman.”* For it is by His Incarnation, and as Son of man, that our Lord unites us to Himself in this mysterious union, whereby, through His life-giving Sacraments, we are “ of His Body, of His Flesh, and of His bones.” In this respect it is, as He said, “ My Father is greater than I.” And yet it is He Himself in other places Who is the Husbandman, “ I will sing to My well-beloved a song of My beloved touching His vineyard ; My well-beloved hath a vineyard.” “ And He planted it with the choicest vine ;” but it was not the true Vine, for it brought forth “ wild grapes.” He is Himself the Lord of the vineyard, Who hired the labourers into it. Again, He is the Heir sent to the vineyard. And now, He is Himself the Vine. Yet He is not the Vine ; for the parts of which it is composed are His elect. And He says afterwards, it is His word that makes clean the branches, therefore He is Himself the Husbandman. Thus throughout these discourses He departs from them, yet He continues with them. He is One with the Father, yet different. He is One with the Comforter, and yet different.

He is the Vine, and His Father the Husbandman: and yet He and the Father are One. He is the Vine, and yet the Vine are His disciples. The wine is His own Blood, and yet He Himself shall drink this Wine with them.

“Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh it away ;” as Judas, who was now gone forth and severed from His Church ; *“and every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth it,”* by His word, by His Spirit, by His Providence, by trials and afflictions, as He was about to do with these His beloved Apostles, not willingly, but *“that it may bear more fruit.”* “He purgeth it,” may signify He maketh it clean ; to which the succeeding expressions may allude. *“Already are ye clean on account of that word which I have spoken unto you.”* Lately He had declared they were clean because they were washed by Him, but now it is His word which hath this purifying power ; cutting off that which was dead, as with the pruning-knife of the husbandman ; or as the vine itself, filling the decaying parts with life, by the sap passing into the branches of the vine. *“Abide in Me and I”* will abide *“in you ;”* how is this communion but by prayer, by keeping His word, by good works, by His holy sacraments, by His sanctifying grace, by the peace of God keeping the heart, by faith exercised in love ? *“As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine ; in like manner neither can ye, except ye shall have abided in Me.”* Again, to put forth still more clearly this most intimate figure, *“I am the Vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. For without Me ye can do nothing.”* It is not said, as St. Austin observes, ye can do little, but *“ye can do nothing.”* As soon as we begin to pride ourselves on any thing what-

ever of our own, so certainly do we lose Thee, O Thou our true Life ; and in humiliation only do we derive of Thee, and keep Thy Spirit within us. For Thy strength is perfected in our weakness. Hence the greatest perfection in man is that which saith, "Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

"*If any one abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.*" He is already not only devoid of fruit, but, as the unfruitful fig-tree, is withered, devoid of all sap of the vine. O wonderful and mysterious life-giving union ! He is still a branch, but a dead branch ; no longer by prayer and communion with God doth he draw life, and then he is cut off from the Body ; but the end is yet to come. "*And they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned ;*" that fire, no doubt, into which the soul is cast, the soul that can never die, and the fire that can never be quenched. But what is the "manifold more in this present time," the mysterious privilege and blessing of them who abide in the Vine ? "*If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be unto you.*" This it is which St. Paul testified from experience when he said, "I can do all things through Christ Which strengtheneth me." They can desire surely nothing but that which is good, for they partake of the Vine, and the Spirit within them cannot ask in vain. It is He that asks, and He that hears, and He that bestows. "*In this is My Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit.*" What unspeakable condescension is it that even God Himself should deign to receive glory from His creatures, and be glorified in their obedience ! This it is in which our meek

Saviour did Himself rejoice, that in His perfect obedience His Father should be glorified. "*So shall ye be My disciples.*" So shall they learn of Him who was obedient even unto death, from that unutterable love to the Father by which He loved His will rather than His own; and such should be the love of Christ also to those who would obey Him; yea, such had it already been.

"*As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you.*" As Mediator between God and man, united to both by unspeakable love; in love interceding with God; in love interceding for man. "*Abide ye in My love.*" To what Divine height of contemplation shall we raise our souls, in order to abide in that love? No, it is not needful that we ascend up to Heaven, nor descend into the deep; for it is in the daily path open to all, and in the heart of all. "*If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.*" With such wonderful and mysterious condescension is such an obedience hallowed, even unto the resemblance of a Divine union! For all true union consists in loving and in doing the will of another; and this is approaching even towards that Divine Unity which is in God; hence all power is in union, all light is in union, all life is in union. "*These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy may abide in you, and your joy may be full.*" What is Thy joy, O most meek and Divine Saviour, and when is Thy joy? is it only on this dark hour of Thy deep humiliation, and of Thine approaching agony, that Thou speakest of Thy joy? and when is this Thy joy to be with Thy chosen, but in this hour of their desertion and bereavement? Thus is it in persecution alone spiritual joy is spoken of, and in every shape of human sorrow Divine consolations break forth.

"This is My commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;" that is, for those whom he loves; for we loved not Him, but were enemies to Him, when He died for us. This is love, and this is joy, if it is to be found in this world; all other pleasures grow less as we grow older, but this alone of doing good; for it is partaking of all-enduring blessedness, so far as it partakes of this Pattern. The deep and hidden music of these words is the harmony of Heaven, which this beloved disciple drunk of so deeply, that he could never think or speak of any thing but this love. But who are they whom Thou callest Thy friends? *"Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever things I command you."* And already, as Thy friends, in anticipation of their obedience, dost Thou call them Thine beforehand, in the greatness of Thy love. *"No longer do I call you servants:"* no longer, for the Jews were as servants; but the servant abideth not in the house for ever; *"for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth,"* as the Jews, who knew not the meaning of their laws and ordinances; *"but I have called you friends; for all things I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you."* He that obeys as a servant shall come to know the will; and he that knoweth the will shall be as a friend. And though He and the Father are One, yet in great condescension does He speak of what He had seen and what He had heard of the Father. *"Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit may remain."* This His choice laid no constraint on their will, that they should not fall, for He had said before, *"Have I not chosen you Twelve, and one of you is a devil?"* Nor had He

chosen them for sensible assurances, or rest and pride in such exceeding great privileges, but for bearing fruit, such fruit as might endure for ever: and that it might bring them in the present time to the great blessedness of being near to God. *"That whatsoever ye ask the Father in My Name, He may give it you."* This is union with Christ and nearness to Him, that His Name may have such power. *"These things I command you, that ye love one another."* Ever and again, and more than ten times, does He return to the mention of keeping the commandments. And still the sweetest close of these more than heavenly harmonies is love: all is wrought for obedience; and all obedience is love; and love is still to go on in obedience, till *"ye love as I have loved you."* But how shall lips unclean, and impure man, speak of those Thy Divine words, when even the inspired Prophet shrunk from before the more distant manifestation of Thy glory?

And what shall be the consolation of the sorrowing disciples under the hatred of the world? that hatred and enmity shall itself be a token of their likeness to Thee, and a pledge of Thy Spirit dwelling within them. *"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me first, before you."* Blessed were they who so lived as to be worthy of that hate; and blessed were they in that outward resemblance to their Lord; for what to them would have been a deeper sorrow than to have been loved by that world that hated their Saviour? *"If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."* Do not expect it otherwise; do not desire to have a portion different from what Mine is. *"Remember the word which I spake unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted Me they*

will also persecute you ;" it is a principle unavoidable, and not a mere accidental contingency. Nor think that you are to succeed in having your words attended to more than mine have been. "*If they have kept My saying, they will also keep yours.*" Yea, it is even My name in you, and My example in you, that will make you to partake of their hate : "*But all these things will they do unto you for My Name's sake, because they know not Him that sent Me.*" This was the same Divine charity that prayed for them, "Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do." But this disclosure of the ineffable Godhead before them will increase their responsibility and their guilt. "*If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin ; but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth Me hateth My Father also.*" Nor is it only the words spoken to them, but the works also which were done before them, which aggravate their guilt. "*If I had not done among them the works that no other man did, they had not had sin : but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father.*" But Christ's Divine counsels shall not be set aside in all these things, as if there was a failure in the appointed dealings of God. "*But that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their Law, They have hated Me without a cause.*" But think not, therefore, that all these things have an end in Me, and that the truth shall fail. "*But when the Comforter shall have come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, Who proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me.*" For He is the Great Witness, and He in you, and you in Him, shall bear testimony of Me ; and that shall ye do even unto death, and shall stand pre-eminent in this name, as witnesses or "Martyrs," even unto the end. Ye are yourselves espe-

cially chosen of Me for this purpose ; and this is what the Holy Ghost will require in filling up the number of the Twelve, that there shall be one who will bear this witness of My ministry, from having been with us from the preaching of John till the time of My being taken up into Heaven. *“And ye also bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning.”*

“These things have I spoken unto you that ye should not be offended ;” or made to fall away, by the greatness of those afflictions which are coming upon you. *“They shall put you out of the synagogues.”* This is the severest trial of all, that they should be esteemed corrupters of that truth, which they die to uphold, and esteemed enemies of that God whom they love. *“Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he is offering up to God a”* religious *“service,”* acceptable to Him. But the same Divine charity again breaks forth, as before, at the mention of their wickedness, as from Him that hath come not to condemn but to save. *“And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor Me.”* The Providence of God usually hides from our eyes the future evils that await us, and why, therefore, does His Prophecy reveal them ? It is that our faith may thereby be strengthened to bear them. *“But these things have I spoken unto you, that when the hour shall have come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I told you not from the beginning, because I was with you.”*

SECTION XII

PROMISE OF THE COMFORTER

“And now I go unto Him that sent Me ; and none of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou ? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.” St. Peter had indeed said, “Whither goest Thou?” but that was when our Lord spoke of His painful death ; but now, when He seems to speak rather of ascending to the Father, the knowledge of this should make them to rejoice in their sorrow for His sake, and for their own also. *“But I tell you the truth, that it is expedient for you that I should depart ; for if I depart not, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.”* If in faith ye behold Me when I have ascended up on high, ye in Him shall have a double portion of the power from above ; as Elisha had when he saw Elijah as he ascended. While they knew “Christ after the flesh,” they could not raise their minds to the spiritual contemplation of His Godhead, they must be weaned from the milk before they are fit for strong meat. *“And when He shall have come, He,”* as the Great Witness, *“shall reprove the world,”* or convict and make manifest as guilty,—*“shall reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment ; of sin, because they believe not in Me.”* For “this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” And this shall appear when it is proved Who I am by My rising from the dead, and the Spirit is given. *“And of righteousness, because I go unto My Father, and*

ye see Me no more." When the righteousness of those who believe in Christ, though they see Him not, will condemn the unbelieving world ; and when it is seen that His righteousness is accepted of the Father, by His raising Him from the dead. "*And of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged,*" for the wicked cannot expect to escape judgment, when the devil himself is judged and cast out ; and when the good, by faith in Christ, trample under foot all the power of the enemy.

"*I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. When He, the Spirit of Truth, shall have come, He will lead you into all the truth. For He shall not speak of Himself.*" The Law had signified that the testimony of one witness is not true, and, therefore, Christ also Himself says, "I speak not of Myself ;" "if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true ;" it is "by two or three witnesses" that "every word shall be established :"
for it is in the Three Persons that saving belief must be. "*But whatsoever He shall hear He shall speak.*" Christ said this also of Himself ; and as the Spirit proceedeth from the Father, His hearing, His seeing, His essence is from the Father. And He shall give proof of His Divinity ; for He adds, "*And He shall tell you things to come.*" And as He is One with the Father, so is He One with the Son also, and proceedeth likewise from the Son : therefore He shall glorify the Son by enlightening you respecting Him, and by teaching one doctrine with Him ; "*He shall glorify Me ; because He shall receive of Mine, and shall tell it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine ; therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall tell it unto you.*"

These things were mysterious, and could not be under-

stood by them ; but the following words of Christ, speaking of His departure, and strange expressions of His own comings and goings, arrest their earnest attention. “*A little while, and ye behold Me not,*” for I shall be hid from your eyes in the grave ; “*and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me ;*” but it is only for a short time of My forty days’ sojourn upon earth, “*for I go to the Father. Some, therefore, of His disciples said amongst themselves, What is this He saith unto us, A little while, and ye behold Me not ; and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me : and, For I go unto the Father ? They said, therefore, What is this that He saith, A little while ? We know not what He speaketh. Jesus therefore knew that they were desirous to ask Him, and said unto them, Concerning this inquire ye among yourselves, because I said, A little while, and ye behold Me not ; and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me ? Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament,*” as mourners over one whom they have lost ; “*but the world shall rejoice.*” The world shall rejoice in having killed the Heir, and cast Him out of the vineyard ; but the joy of the world bringeth woe and death ; and the sorrow of the Christian is but the prelude to eternal joy. “*Ye shall be sorrowful : but your heaviness shall be turned into joy.*” This truth, emblematic of Resurrection, that “sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning,” pervades all Scripture, and is stamped on all nature : for thus morning follows night, and spring comes after winter, and the travails of nature precede the eternal regeneration and adoption of sons. “*A woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour hath come ; but when she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.*” Such

shall be your sorrow when I am in the grave ; and such shall be your sorrow through the period of this world ; when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and the children of the bridechamber shall mourn ; but when I arise ye shall rejoice ; and such your joy is the pledge and type of your unfailing joy, when we shall be united in your resurrection. *“And ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again ; and your heart shall rejoice ; and your joy no man taketh from you.”*

“And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing,” as if ye needed information ; for the Spirit Himself shall reveal unto you all things, such as no heart hath conceived : and this is to you the pledge and foretaste of that state wherein ye shall fully know all things. But think not that I mean, I shall not be present to answer your requests, far otherwise. *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, That whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name. Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”* I seem now to speak to you darkly, and as ye cannot understand ; but after the Resurrection, when I shall speak to you of the things concerning the kingdom, and when the Spirit shall have been given, and the spiritual Kingdom is established, then you will understand Me better : *“These things have I spoken unto you in parables ; but the hour cometh when I shall no longer speak to you in parables, but shall tell you plainly concerning the Father. In that day,”* when the Kingdom of the Spirit shall have come, and ye are brought to the vision of the Son of God, and are being changed into the same image from glory to glory ; *“in that day ye shall ask in My Name ; and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you.”* I need not tell you that I will intercede

for you, as the great Mediator and Intercessor; for ye shall yourselves find access with boldness to the Throne of God. *"For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and believed that I came forth from God."* And if God shall thus admit you into the fulness of His love below, that ye can desire nothing but what ye shall obtain, how much more in that state of which it is the earnest and shadow, when being satisfied with the pleasures of His House, ye shall have nothing to desire, and nothing to ask for; nor need any more a Mediator and Intercessor to ask the Father for you.

"I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples say unto Him, Lo, now speakest Thou plainly:" even already dost Thou as Thou hast promised to do in that day; *"and speakest no parable. Now we know that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any should ask Thee."* For He had thus seen and answered this great doubt and perplexity, which had been so much on their minds. *"By this,"* Thy knowledge of our hearts, *"we believe that Thou camest forth from God."* But our Blessed Lord, whenever any profession of belief or assurance was made, ever turns immediately to remind mankind of their weakness. *"Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?"* Is it now at length that ye come to have faith in Me as God? *"Behold, the hour cometh, and now hath come, when ye shall be scattered, each unto his own, and shall leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, for the Father is with Me. These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."*

This was the last legacy which the best of Friends, and

the most kind of Fathers, had to bequeath to those whom He loved beyond all earthly love,—“in the world ye shall have tribulation;” for thus only they come to know and rejoice in Him Who hath overcome the world. How much might be said of these words! How much of Divine teaching might we suck out of every part, like that honey out of the stony rock, which satisfies! Sweet and unearthly harmonies! Words from Him that loved not in word only, but “in deed and in truth,” in this hour of His last earthly parting and of approaching agony—of parting from those whom He loved as no man yet hath loved! Words of melody from the Heaven of Heavens; strains to which we still listen, and as we listen feel more and more that we understand them not; but love again and again to hear them! Words of Divine Love itself imparted to the world by the disciple of love!

SECTION XIII

THE GREAT INTERCESSION

WE have now had the true Sacrifice and “pure oblation” of the New Passover, in which the shadows of the Law are fulfilled; and we naturally look for the Incense also, of which such mention is made throughout the Old Testament, and which is fulfilled in the Kingdom of Heaven, as we are told in the Revelation, by the Prayers of the Saints, or by that which accompanies them and renders them acceptable; “The smoke of the Incense with the prayers of the Saints ascended up before God.” It is fulfilled, no doubt, in the Prayer of the great Intercession, which here follows at the very close of all, as a part of

and joined on to His Sacrifice ; Christ's last Prayer on His taking His solemn leave of them by the Eucharist and the Eucharistic discourses. He now turns from man to God : and it must be with fear and trembling that we repeat these expressions. For in the highest sense of the words, "the Lord is in His Holy Temple," God the Son, as Son of Man, interceding with the Father for the salvation of mankind. When St. Paul was raised to the third Heaven, he heard unspeakable words which it is not for man to utter ; and in like manner, when we are admitted to hear the words of this Prayer, we may well hide our eyes, and adore, and worship. We can no more understand them in their depth and fulness, than we can gaze on the unapproachable and true Light.

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to Heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come ; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee ! As Thou hast given Him authority over all flesh," i. e. as Son of Man, in which character He now prays to the Father. In like manner, He says at the Resurrection, "all authority hath been given Me in Heaven and on earth ;" and St. Paul, that God the Father "hath put all things under His feet," i. e. as Man. Thus was He ever pleased, as St. Chrysostom and St. Austin observe, to speak in His humiliation, as inferior to the Father, and as if delighting in His lowliness as Son of Man. *"That with regard to all which Thou hast given Him, He may give unto them eternal life."* For "all that the Father giveth Me," He says in another place, "shall come to Me ;" and "him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." It is the Father Who gives them unto the Son, and the Son gives unto them eternal life ; and this eternal life is to know the Father and the Son. *"And this is eternal life, that they may*

know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent." Both are necessary ; to know God, Who is the end ; and also to know Jesus Christ, Who is the Way ; Who is "the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world ;" "dwelling in the Light which no man can approach unto." Thus He had said to His disciples, "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." To know God is life, and therefore to advance more and more in the knowledge of God, is to partake more and more abundantly of life for ever.

"I have glorified Thee upon earth. I have finished the work that Thou gavest Me to do." Thus He says afterwards, "It is finished." This is the prayer which none but Christ can make, perfecting that which He had to do. But how is "the work finished," when in some sense it is but now just begun? It was finished in one respect indeed, in that it was the termination of His life ; but finished altogether in His foreknowledge and predestination. It is finished, as was His sacrifice of Himself, for He had already imparted His Body and Blood : finished in Him as the Root of all, for both beginning and end are in Him ; or finished in His purpose, which is equivalent to effect. *"And now glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thine own Self, with that glory which I had before the world was, with Thee."* He was as God in glory co-equal and co-eternal with the Father ; yet as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," and as the Son of Man, had He been glorified in the predestination of the Father. Or it may be, He was glorified as both God and Man ; for as both in One He now intercedes in being our High Priest ; and it is written, that because, being as God, and equal to God, He humbled Himself, and took on Him the form of a servant ; there-

fore hath God highly exalted Him, and hath given Him a Name above every name. Therefore, as God the Son glorifies God the Father, so also, perhaps, the Father glorifies the Son as God.

"I have manifested Thy Name unto the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world." As One with the Father He had before said, "I have chosen you out of the world." But here He as Son of Man attributes it, not to His own election of them, but to the gift of the Father; and though it is spoken in the past tense, yet it includes the future also, as the words of Him with Whom there is no time: for unto all His elect unto the end He manifests the Father, and they all are given Him. *"Thine they were,"* in Thy secret predestination unknown to man and inscrutable; *"and Thou gavest them unto Me"* as the Son of Man: *"and they have kept Thy word,"* for He had said, all whom the Father giveth Me shall come to Me. *"Now have they known that all things which Thou hast given Me are of Thee."* For having obeyed the word, they have come to "know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself." *"For the words which Thou gavest Me have I given unto them."* Thus He before had said unto them, "The word that I speak unto you is not Mine, but His that sent Me." *"And they have received them, and have known of a truth that I came forth from Thee, and have believed that Thou hast sent Me."* This also our Lord often alludes to, that by keeping His words men come to know the Father, for He says, "He that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me." *"I pray for them; I pray not for the world; but for those whom Thou hast given Me: because they are Thine."* For this is that great prayer of Intercession on which the Salvation of the Church depended, and the Prayer of Christ

cannot but be availing to the attainment of that for which He prays ; thus when He prayed for His murderers, the Centurion, who was one of them, on that day believed ; and when St. Stephen prayed for his persecutors, St. Paul, the chief of them, was pardoned. And therefore, if it had been right that Christ should have prayed for all the world, it may be that all the world would have been saved ; but the Church only is saved out of the world, and for the Church only He prays. "There is a sin unto death ; I do not say that ye should pray for it," says St. John : and the Great Intercessor knows what is that sin unto death, in which the world lies, as distinct from His Church : and it is especially for the Church that this great Prayer of sanctification is, for the Church which was then, and was to be till the end. "*And all Mine are Thine ; and Thine are Mine. And I am glorified in them ;*" already glorified in their faith and obedience. "Thine they were," said He before, "and Thou hast given them unto Me ;" here is distinction. But "All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine ;" here is union. "Thine are Mine ;" therefore they belonged unto Christ before they were given by the Father. "And all Mine are Thine ;" therefore after they were given unto Christ, they belonged unto the Father. O wonderful and unspeakable union ! And blessed was that imitation of the same upon earth, when the Holy Spirit came down, and men "had all things in common," "neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own." "*And I am no longer in the world,*" in bodily presence as the Son of Man, of which He had now said so much. "*And these are in the world : and I come to Thee.*"

It may be observed, that almost all these expressions of Christ to the Father, in the presence of the disciples, seem

to have a reference to things spoken in His previous discourse with them ; in both alike He speaks of His departure—and of His being One with the Father,—of His union of will with the Father,—of their union with Him,—of the world not knowing God ;—of their love to each other, and sanctification in Him,—of the Father abiding with them in their love to each other. As if therein, in this twofold expression of the same things, first of all to man, and then to the Father, were contained some mysterious manifestation flowing from the ineffable union of Christ with God, and with man : so that what He says to man as their Saviour and their Judge, He says also the same things unto God as their Intercessor and High Priest : but when He speaks to man, it is for the glory of God ; and when He speaks to God it is for the edification of man.

“ *Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name, whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one as We are ;*” that the union of Christians through the Spirit, Who is Love, may be after some resemblance of the incomprehensible and mysterious Unity of the Godhead. “ *When I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy Name. Those whom Thou hast given Me have I preserved ; and no one out of them hath perished, but the son of perdition ; that the Scripture might be fulfilled.*” He had chosen them in act, and one of them whom He had chosen had a devil ; but those who were chosen according to that mysterious election of God, as those good disciples of whom He said, that the world hated them because He had “ chosen them out of the world,” of these none shall perish or be finally lost. But the son of perdition was not thus given Him ; for He said of all those whom the Father had given Him, He should give unto them eternal life. “ *And now I come*

to Thee ; and these things I speak in the world that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves." " For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross, despising the shame," and in these discourses He wished to make His disciples partakers of that His joy ; that in Him they might "rejoice in hope," as a woman in travail, even in tribulation, in hope rejoices ; and thus as they were to fill up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ, His joy also might be fulfilled in them. "*I have given unto them Thy word. And the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, as I am not of the world.*" Christ is not of the world, because He is born of the Spirit ; and they who are born of the Spirit, although in another and far different manner, yet they also are not of the world. "*I ask not that Thou wouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou wouldest preserve them from the evil.*" Although to depart is "far better," yet to remain is "more needful," for their own purification and the edification of others. "*They are not of the world, as I am not of the world.*" For every one that hath this hope purifieth himself even as Christ is pure ; and they are not of the world because they are sanctified in Him. And now as they have faith, yet still need faith ; as they are converted, and yet still need conversion ; as they know God and Jesus Christ Whom He hath sent, and yet have still to grow in this knowledge ; so, although sanctified, yet they still need greater sanctification and increase in Grace. And therefore our Lord prays for them as if they were still unsanctified by Him. "*Sanctify them in Thy truth. Thy word is truth.*" He prays for their being sanctified in God's truth, in distinction from the sanctifications and cleansings of the Law, which were not real purifications, but typical and shadowy ; whereas in Christ is "grace and

truth," and "of His fulness have we received:" in order that we may "worship the Father," not by legal rites, or presuming on imputed righteousness, but "in spirit and in truth." Here also we may observe the same mysterious Union of the Godhead; for here it is the Father's word that sanctifies; but before they were clean through the word which Christ had spoken unto them. "*As Thou hast sent Me into the world, so have I sent them into the world.*" For as they are Apostles, so is Christ Himself also called "the Apostle" to the Hebrews: all is in Divine order and commission: for thus only is Divine union preserved; and in Divine union alone is the power of Grace. "*And for them I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in the truth.*" As the victims, and all things offered to God, were sanctified in the Law; so does He sanctify Himself, not legally but truly, for the great sacrifice of Himself. This is for our sakes; for of Himself He had no need of sanctification, being Himself infinite holiness: but as He prayed, as He fasted, as He learned obedience, so also does He sanctify Himself, for our sakes. All is for our sakes; His sacrifice, His obedience, His sanctification, His prayers aloud to the Father, and the Father's answer aloud to Him, all are for our sakes; that we also may thus give up ourselves for others, that we may obey, sanctify, and sacrifice ourselves, and pray for others.

But this great Prayer of Sanctification and Intercession is not for the Apostles only, but in them for the whole Church. "*But not for these alone do I ask; but for those also who shall believe in Me through their word; that all may be One, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be One in Us. That the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.*" The conversion of the world depends on this union amongst Christians, and

it is by thus having "love one to another," that they are known to be Christ's disciples. "*And I have given them the glory which Thou hast given Me.*" This is the glory which St. Paul so often speaks of as belonging to Christians, who are changed from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. "*That they may be one as We are One.*" That they may be united together in that union which their nature admits of, even as the Three Persons in one God are united by Unity of Substance : that they may be one in faith and love, and one by partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, whereby Christians are made one Bread and one Body. And here again does our Lord express in prayer to the Father what He had spoken to His disciples—of His coming to make His abode with them ;—of Himself and the Father coming to abide with them ; if they lived in mutual love. "*I in them and Thou in Me ; that they may be perfected in One ; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.*" For in Him hath the Father chosen us ; in Him hath He loved us ; in Him hath He sanctified, and justified, and glorified His elect.

But the whole of this sanctifying and interceding Prayer of our Great High Priest, for the salvation of His elect, seems to be summed up in the following concluding words. Many have dwelt with human wonder on the majestic simplicity with which the work of Creation is expressed, in the words, "Let there be Light, and there was light ;" and on other such simple declarations of Divine power. But such refer to things sensible ; and if we would as much realize things spiritual and eternal, the Divine attributes, and the Word that creates "the new Heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness ;" with no less awe and wonder should we read these last words, the

words, we may say with fear and awe, of Those Who said in the beginning, "Let Us make man in Our own Image." "*Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.*" He had said to His disciples, "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me, and where I am there also shall My servant be." Yet before this we read, "No man hath ascended up to Heaven, but He that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man, Which is in Heaven." But the Son of David, the Child of the Virgin, Who is set down on the Right hand of the Majesty on high, hath taken His elect to be fellow-heirs with Him in His kingdom; and the Father, according to His Prayer "hath made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." "*That they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee; and these have known that Thou hast sent Me. And I have declared unto them Thy Name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them.*" "I have declared Thy Name, and will declare it:" or "I have made it known, and will make it known." "I have made it known," says St. Augustin, "through faith; I will make it known through sight: I have made it known to those who are travelling unto the end; and I will make it known to those who without end shall reign." To which we may add, that in fulfilment of the first, and in pledge and type of that fuller manifestation, would He make it known even now unto us by the Spirit until the end; revealing those things which "God hath prepared for them that love Him;" until that time when these words more fully may be accomplished, when "the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

SECTION XIV

THE GOING FORTH

"When Jesus had spoken these things," says St. John, *"He went forth together with His disciples."* St. Matthew and St. Mark, *"And when they had sung an hymn, they went forth unto the Mount of Olives."* And St. Luke, *"He went forth, and proceeded, as His custom was, unto the Mount of Olives."* The Hymn is supposed by some to have been the Great Hallel, sung at the Paschal Supper, consisting of some Psalms, from the cxiiith to the cxviiith inclusive. And in furtherance of this supposition, it may be allowed that certainly St. Matthew and St. Mark do introduce matters referring to the old dispensation; and these Psalms would be full of significant import for this occasion. Thus, alluding to our Lord's unspeakable condescensions on this evening, it is said, "Who is like unto the Lord our God, That hath His dwelling so High, and yet humbleth Himself to behold the things which are in Heaven and earth?" and then of the Wine His disciples speak in the same, "I will receive the cup of salvation;" and again, "right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints:" and then the closer description of our Lord's sufferings: His enemies compassing Him about, and thrusting sore at Him: but His assurance that He "shall not die, but live;"—that God "had not given Him over unto death;" the opening of "the gates of righteousness:" the rejected Stone becoming the Head of the Corner; "the Day which the Lord hath made," in which "we will rejoice and be glad;" the Sacrifice bound with cords, "yea,

even unto the horns of the Altar." Thus may the Hymn of the old Paschal Feast become a type of the New Song, which the redeemed shall sing in the Kingdom of God. Thus they were now going forth from that city, where, according to the Law, they had met for the Passover;—were going forth unto the Mount of Olives, which was the place of Christ's agony, and of His Ascension: that Mount of the Christian Church, where the Saints are to be like olive branches round about His table.

During this their sorrowful walk our Lord again returned to the subject, which He had already so often prepared His disciples to meet. "*And*" (Mark) "*then*" (Matt.) "*saith Jesus unto them, Ye all shall be offended in Me in this night; for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep (of the flock,*" Matt.) "*shall be scattered*" (Matt., Mark). Thus did He turn their attention to that remarkable prophecy of Zechariah, when He was to be "wounded in the house of His friends," when the hand of God would be turned "upon the little ones;" and a fiery trial, as of gold, awaited those that should remain¹. But still their Lord's words went on mysteriously to intimate, that the good Shepherd, who layeth down His life for the sheep, would not forsake them even then: for He added, "*But after I am risen I will go before you into Galilee*" (Matt., Mark), will go before them as a shepherd does, to lead His flock, who "know His voice, and follow Him." "*But Peter (answered and,*" Matt.) "*said unto Him, Though all shall be offended (in Thee,*" Matt.), "*yet will not I*" (Mark), "*I will never be offended*" (Matt.). That they should all be offended is not so much to be wondered at, for "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord excepting by the Holy Ghost²;" and the Holy Spirit was not yet given. But in

¹ Zech. xiii.

² 1 Cor. xii. 3.

the words of St. Peter, there is not only a denial of our Lord's words, who is Himself "the Truth;" but something of a presumptuous declaration beyond his brother Apostles. For it may be observed that his earnest asseveration seems to increase each time it is repeated; first of all in St. John it is rather an exclamation of affectionate impulse than of presumption, expressing his desire to be with Christ: "Why can I not follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake;" afterwards there is more of self-confidence, for it is in answer to our Lord's declaration that Satan had desired to have them; but now it implies more a putting himself before the other Disciples. And, therefore, it may have been that he was deserted by the good Spirit, so far as not only to have been offended, but also to have denied, and that three times; and, as if in strong contrast to his three self-confident assertions, when he was charged by a woman; and the second time with an oath; and thirdly, even the more vehemently, saying, "I know not the Man." "*Jesus answered him,*" as if with a stronger and more solemn emphasis than before, "*Verily, I say unto you, That (to day,*" Mark), "*on this very night, before the cock crow (twice,*" Mark), "*thou shalt thrice deny Me*" (Matt., Mark); "*Peter saith unto Him*" (Matt.), "*But he with far greater vehemence said*" (Mark), "*Although it be necessary for me to die with Thee, I will never deny Thee. So likewise said*" (Matt., Mark) "*they all*" (Mark), "*all the disciples*" (Matt.).

As on the Mount of Transfiguration, so also now, St. Peter "knew not what he said." "For to die with Jesus," says Origen, "Who died for us all, that we might live, was not for men to do; for they were all in their sins, and they all had need that another should die for them, and not they for others³."

³ Com. in Matt. 83.

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